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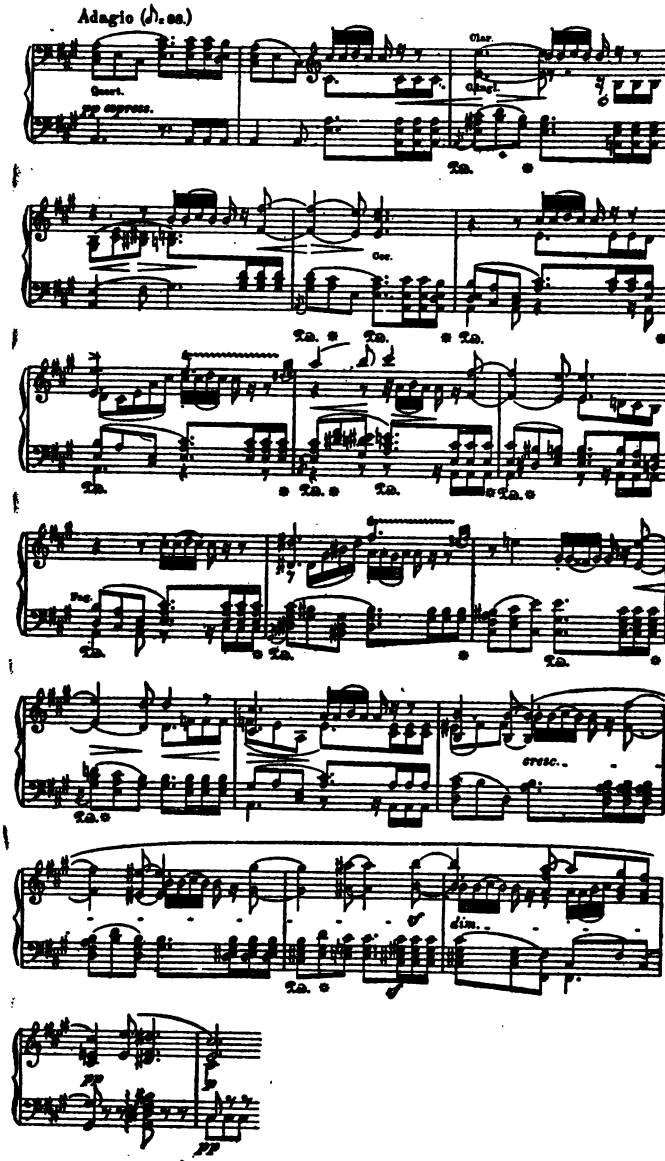
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MUSIC AND THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT IN FRANCE

BY

ARTHUR WARE LOCKE

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRUBNER & Co., LTD.
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.
1920

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
BEN JOHNSON AND CO., LTD., YORK, ENGLAND.

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PREFACE

THE study of the evolution of art and music in connection with contemporary social and political conditions has been urged on the ground that an understanding of the general life of any period is necessary to a sympathetic understanding of the artistic production of that period. Some argue, on the other hand, that the study of art is, in fact, a study of the history of man and that it illuminates the study of history rather than *vice versa*. The truth is that, in studying either art or history, certain general causes appear which influence the development of both artistic and political ideas. Whatever we learn about these fundamental causes—whether in art or history—the knowledge we gain can always be helpful in unravelling any problems of art-development or of history that we try to solve.

For the general underlying causes behind the changes which came at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, I have drawn freely, in the present essay, upon various authorities. I am largely indebted to Professor Irving Babbitt of Harvard University, whose lectures have provided the main stimulus for the present study and whose book *Rousseau and Romanticism* (Houghton and Mifflin, Boston, 1919) is a definitive exposition of the many phases of the romantic point of view. My effort has been, after giving the reader a brief description of the intellectual background of the romantic period, to set against this background the prominent figures in the musical life of France, with the double object, first, of placing each composer in the light which the understanding of the background throws on his work, and, second, of showing what each contributed to the main current of romanticism.

Northampton, Mass.

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I

THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

In the revolution of feeling and thought which came at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries and which has been called "the romantic movement," French music took an active though belated part. It was not until the days of Hugo's *Preface to Cromwell*, with its romantic ultimatum, and of the first performances of his *Ernani* and of Vigny's *Chatterton*, when, indeed, the storm of the romantic revolt burst with a fury which presaged the end, that the *Fantastic Symphony* of Berlioz gave French music as prominent a place in the romantic movement as French literature and painting. The works of Berlioz represent French musical romanticism in its most complete form. The romantic features of his music were not mere reflections from literature and the other arts, for Berlioz was as independent a factor in the romantic revolt as Hugo or Delacroix. His music was a direct and original expression of the general forces which gave birth to the romantic movement, and it showed most of the symptoms of "the disease of the age."

In order to understand the music of Berlioz and the other French romantic composers, it is necessary to study the underlying principles of the romantic movement in general. The political and social changes which were a part of the romantic movement found expression in the growing tendency of composers to free themselves from the bonds of patronage, to take a more independent place in society and a more conscious part in the assertion of national individuality. The changes in philosophic and religious thought influenced music less directly. The closest affinities between music and the romantic movement are found in a comparative study of the music and the literature of the time, because the literary romanticists expressed most fully the changes in æsthetic ideas, and also because the leaders in literary romanticism dominated the artistic society of the times. Music is the language of emotion rather than of logic; consequently the changes which influence people's modes of feeling are most important in the consideration of the changes in musical expression.

It must not be forgotten that the romantic movement was only the background, that music was not merely imitative of literature and the other arts, but had its own independent growth

influenced partly by causes which were strictly musical, such as the invention and perfection of new instruments and the development of the sonata form. In considering romantic music in general, therefore, we must take into account both the changes in the society and the life of the times, and those in literature and the other arts, as well as the natural independent progress of the art of music itself.

The romantic movement was primarily a movement of revolt and must first of all be judged in reference to the conditions from which it revolted. The primary impulse of the movement came as a much needed protest against the conventionality, the artificiality, and the pseudo-classicism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the name of natural sympathy and feeling, the romantic movement went to work to break down the barriers of formal restraint which had been thrown up by the preceding generations.

The representative man of the pseudo-classic age was an imitation of a model which had been set up and called "l'honnête homme." He was essentially a creature of restraint and perfect poise; spontaneous enthusiasm was foreign to his nature. His utterances must be dignified. The *honnête homme* did not

obey his impulses but was ruled by decorum, "the grand masterpiece to observe."* The favorite epithet for anyone who was original and did not imitate this model set up by society was *un monstre*—a freak. It was the classic principle of the individual subordinated to the general laws of society, but carried to such an extreme that man became a caricature of his natural self. This period of the *ancien régime* has been called the "Zopf" or "perruque" period and Carlyle has characterized it as the period of "gigmanity"—the respectability of keeping a gig. The court of Louis the XIV was typical of the artificiality of the time.

Nowhere was tradition stronger than in literature. An epic, to attain success, must imitate Virgil, and pseudo-classic literature in general tended to degenerate, not only into an imitation of classic models, but even into an imitation of imitations. Convention limited the writer's vocabulary by rejecting word after word as indecorous. Racine used about one-third as large a vocabulary as Shakspere, and Voltaire condemned Hamlet for the line, "not a mouse stirred," because a mouse should not be introduced into tragedy. Tragedy was for the aristocrats, comedy for the *bourgeoisie*, and

* Milton.

farce for the peasants. The structure of the drama was rigidly bound by the unities of time, place, and action, derived from Aristotle's poetics, and it was not until the performance of Hugo's *Ernani* in 1830 that the stage really was freed from the pseudo-classic tradition.

One by one these conventions were destroyed by the leaders of the "enlightenment," Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Condillac, and others of the *Encyclopédistes*. But there is one fundamental difference between such leaders of the "enlightenment" as Voltaire and Condillac, and Rousseau. The first two broke down tradition in the name of reason, the latter in the name of emotional immediacy. The pseudo-classicists had placed reason above emotion, and in his sympathy with this principle Voltaire prolonged classicism. The classic ideas of restraint and of cool rationalism were to continue for a while, even well into the nineteenth century, alongside of the new cult of romanticism. Even when romanticism dominated the intellectual current of all Europe, it would be absurd to conceive of classicism as having disappeared altogether. After all, classicism and romanticism are made up of the same elements only in vastly differing proportions. The pseudo-classicists never

entirely excluded emotion nor did the romanticists do away with thought, though at their worst, it must be confessed, they made extraordinary attempts to do so.

In the rise of romanticism Rousseau was the most gifted and most significant figure. Although much in his theories can be traced back to the English sentimentalism of the early eighteenth century, the original force of his arguments made him the leader in the great battle for the romantic idea. His influence was transmitted through Bernadin de St. Pierre and Chateaubriand to Victor Hugo and George Sand. Spread to Germany it was there reflected and brought back in the writings of Mme. de Staël.

Rousseau stands primarily for emotional individualism. He asserted that science and civilization had led people away from nature, and argued that emotional instinct should be the guiding principle of man's conduct. In order to get back to the natural man, the restraints and artificialities of civilized society must be cast aside. In opposing the classic principle of decorum which had set up a law of restraint for the mere animal impulses, Rousseau asserted that man's natural instincts were good. While the classicist subordinated the individual to the laws of society, the *sens*

propre to the *sens commun*, Rousseau exalted the law of individuality. Pater has quoted the opening lines of Rousseau's *Confessions* as representative of the whole romantic movement. "I am different from all men I have seen. If I am not better, at least I am different."

This emphasis on emotional individualism led to a revival of the poetry of passion, stimulated an interest in nature, and inspired a spiritual renaissance which was to find its culmination in the writings of Chateaubriand. Now, to no art could emotionalism mean so much as to music. Consequently it is this aspect of the romantic movement which was most important in its influence on the development of music. That music did not respond sooner to the wild note of revolt against tradition for the sake of emotion, was chiefly because music in the eighteenth century was in such a transitional stage of technical development. But, as the "language of the emotions," it was bound sooner or later to be a protagonist in a movement of which one of the principal tenets was the exaltation of emotion over reason.

The change from the social and political conditions of the eighteenth century to those of the nineteenth was marked by no less an

upheaval than the French Revolution. It was a revolt from extremes of autocratic government, and it strove to release a new freedom of thought in social, political, and religious affairs. The shackles of aristocratic government were broken in the name of universal fraternity. The culmination of the French Revolution in irrational imperialism,* the opposite of the object for which it set out, does not disprove the cause for its initial impulse. In emphasizing the freedom of the individual, the revolutionists placed the " sympathetic rebel " on a pedestal. The crimes of the outlaw were pardoned because society and not the outlaw was responsible for them. Schiller was made an honorary citizen in the French Republic out of admiration for his play, *Die Räuber*, in which the chief character is a brigand, with a " beautiful soul," who has been forced into his profession by the conditions of a false society. In music the revolutionary spirit of the age was shown in the altered relations of composer to patron. Haydn had held but a servile position at the court of Prince Esterhazy, but Beethoven, only a few years later, was able to take a free and independent place in the social life of Vienna.

It is, however, an illusion to think that

* See Seillière: *Le mal romantique.*

political freedom means freedom of thought. Nothing was more obstructive to the development of romantic art and literature than the dead level of the bourgeois point of view of the First Republic. The bourgeois mind could not see beyond the material present and had no conception of the relation of art and literature to life. In England, Carlyle and Matthew Arnold fought the "philistines." In musical history we think of Schumann with his "Davidsbündler contre les philistins" and Berlioz with his tirade in *Lélio* against the despoilers of art.

To many in France the reign of reason meant the substitution of science for religion. A mechanistic theory of life came to take the place of the exploded absurdities of religious belief. Some merely exchanged the slavery of dogmatism for the slavery of agnosticism. But there were others, philosophers, scientists, socialists, and priests, who looked below the surface currents of the time and tried to make an adjustment and reconstruction of philosophic ideas, not forgetting the past and with a view to the future. Such were Saint-Simon, Fourier, Lamennais, Ballanche, and Auguste Comte, who, says Émile Faguet, in speaking of this whole group, did not think "que ce fût purement et simplement un des

anciens pouvoirs spirituels qu'il fallait rétablir tel qu'il avait été ; mais qu'on devait restaurer l'un ou l'autre des anciens pouvoirs spirituels sous une forme nouvelle et avec un nouvel esprit."* The fact that Saint-Simon, in his all-embracing scheme of philanthropic religion with its ideas of social equality, popular education, and moral freedom, placed music with the other arts as one of the chief means for spiritual uplift, did much to encourage musicians to take a more active and dignified part in the social and artistic life of their times. In general, however, the relation of music with politics, philosophy, or religion was indirect rather than direct. It seems from the nature of the art of music that it must always be so. We can at least say that whatever in philosophy or religion tended to explain or express the spiritual nature of man, found in romantic music a powerful ally.

Returning to the development of romanticism in literature, we find Mme. de Staël and Chateaubriand as the two most prominent figures at the opening of the nineteenth century. They were practically the founders of the romantic school in French literature.

Rousseau had been the object of Mme. de

* Faguet : *Politiques et Moralistes du* 19 *siècle.*

Staël's early admiration and her first literary work was the *Lettres sur J.-J. Rousseau* in 1788. Her more important works were her *Littérature*, which appeared in 1800, and her *Allemagne*, the entire first French edition of which was destroyed by order of Napoleon. She was Swiss herself but of mixed heredity. It is said that she had a French head and a German heart. Her two visits to Weimar and her intimacy with Friedrich Schlegel, who, for some time, was a tutor in her family, explain her special preoccupation with the romantic movement in Germany. It was she who connected the streams of thought which were flowing in more or less parallel lines in France and Germany. Goethe, who, at the time of her visits to Weimar, felt a national antipathy for her, later said that she broke a large gap in the Chinese wall which separated Germany from France and the rest of Europe. She brought into France the nebulous romanticism of the North—the "septentrional" idea that depth and seriousness are the distinctive characteristics of the people of northern countries. She believed in the poetic value of that melancholy which found, to her mind, its most perfect expression in German thought. Stimulated by Rousseau toward universal sym-

pathy, and moved by an insatiable intellectual curiosity, her horizon took in the literary and social activities of all Europe. Her enthusiasm inspired renewed interest in lyricism, art, religion, criticism, and philosophy. Representing as she does the broadening mind of the time, free from all conventionality of thought, she stands pre-eminently for intellectual cosmopolitanism.

Chateaubriand's importance was national rather than international. He exerted a great influence on French literature by giving fluent and beautiful expression to the emotional ideas originated by Rousseau. "Mme. de Staël thought and taught other people how to think. Chateaubriand felt and taught other people how to feel." Religion, like everything else in life, appealed to him æsthetically. He cultivated emotion. He had the romantic desire to feel and suffer uniquely, and there is an ever increasing egoism in the expression of his melancholy. *René* is the story of unhappiness caused by hidden, indefinable longing; all the young men of Chateaubriand's time were led to imagine themselves Renés. Lasserre* remarks that, "Dégagé de son orchestration, le thème de René est bien le thème d'Adolphe;

* Lasserre: *Le romantisme français.*

vide, ennui, impuissance à participer aux émotions naturelles de l'homme, à entrer dans le cours commun de la vie, perpétuel appel de la sensibilité désolée à la passion." Melancholy was the universal malady and it was nearly always an extremely self-cultivated melancholy. The sincere romantic longing of Senancour in literature and of Chopin in music, was exceptional and in strong contrast to Chateaubriand's morbid nostalgia.

Where Chateaubriand excelled all other writers was in the marvellous picturesqueness and color of his descriptive style and in the lyric beauty of his language. Travel in many foreign countries including the wilderness of America, provided him with inexhaustible material for his art. Picturesqueness rather than accuracy, color rather than clear outline, made his pictures live vividly in the imagination. He luxuriated in the color suggestiveness of language and developed the grand orchestra of words, as Berlioz later created the grand orchestra of musical sounds. He was a poet who wrote in prose. The remarkable outburst of romantic lyric poetry was largely due to the stimulus which his works gave. The exquisite lyricism of Chateaubriand was reflected in the music of Liszt, his picturesqueness and brilliant

color in the great orchestral compositions of Berlioz. The dwelling on what was peculiar to one person or to one place was a distinctly romantic trait. The classicist constructed his philosophy from what was common and fundamental in life and nature; the romanticist sought after the unusual and fell into exoticism and orientalism. Romantic art had to add "strangeness to beauty." David's *Le Désert* was a sensational example in music of the romantic interest in the Orient, and we think of the whole nineteenth century in music as the time when local color became one of its most marked characteristics.

After Mme. de Staël and Chateaubriand the romanticists became a recognized literary party, and romanticism a cult, through which the romantic tendencies were often exaggerated into caricatures of their original forms. Poets competed with one another to display the intensity of their sufferings. Musset drew the famous image of a pelican feeding her young from her flesh. Each poet imagining himself alone in the world withdrew into his "ivory tower." Yet this solitude was not one of silence, for the romanticist could not resist telling the world of his unique and utter loneliness. Each wanted to live in a "hermit's cell on the stage." To

egoism was added eccentricity. In fact the whole movement was eccentric in the sense that all these tendencies led away from the classic, concentric, conception of art as representing feelings which are common to human nature, rather than peculiar to an individual. Cutting loose from the old connections with mankind the romanticists found themselves isolated and lonely with nothing to substitute for what they had lost Lasserre, in his extremely anti-romantic *Le romantisme français*, considers all this later period as the decadent sequel of the real romantic movement, which had ended with Mme. de Staël and Chateaubriand.

The emotional intensity of the romantic *cénacle* was not, however, all wasted in exaggerated posturing, but expressed itself in a marvellous outburst of lyric poetry in the works of Lamartine, Hugo, Vigny, and Musset. Of these, Vigny was the most philosophical and his poetry is the most lasting. He had more of the stoic in his nature and did not exaggerate the sensitiveness of his feelings. Musset, on the contrary, exhibited all the pain of his wounded heart. Lamartine was more optimistic. In romantic poetry there is the effort to substitute for real religion a religion of

beauty, of science, of nature, of love, or of humanity. Each in turn proves an illusion and the poet is left uncomforted in his suffering solitude. In the work of all these poets there are qualities which are clearly paralleled in music, their subjectivity, their melancholy, and their freedom from restraint. The romantic poets also show a free, revolutionary attitude toward the traditional forms of their art, exactly as did Berlioz, Liszt, and Chopin. Lamartine's trait of poetic improvisation is seen in the *Années de Pélérinage* of Liszt, and the spontaneous lyricism of all romantic poetry finds complete expression in the music of Liszt and Chopin.

Hugo and Vigny led the way in the sensational revolution in the drama. Here there was a more radical breaking down of the traditions. The classical conventions of the drama had shown a particular strength in withstanding the assaults of the revolutionary spirit. It was not until Hugo's *Ernani* in 1830 that the romanticists really obtained possession of the stage, but the breaking down of the conventions then was all the more ruthless. The one rule of the new drama was to mirror actual life. Decorum was banished and the wildest and weirdest scenes were portrayed without restraint. The

romanticists wanted strong emotions with no squeamishness as to how the emotions were produced. In the search for thrills they forgot the dignity of tragedy. They forgot, when they portrayed "the saturnalia of a mother's grief," that restrained feeling is more powerful than unrestrained feeling. The revolutionary spirit is bound to go to extremes, particularly when the fray is at its hottest, as it was at the *première* of *Ernani*. The romantic poets, artists, and musicians who rallied around the banner raised by Hugo in 1830 were as radical as could be any army of political revolutionists, and the victory which they gained through the success of *Ernani* only led them into wilder extravagances.

Of other leaders in the literary romantic movement, George Sand requires special notice for her connection with romantic musicians, particularly Liszt and Chopin. She, herself, went through all the phases of the romantic movement. She was the romantic Titaness. In her own words, after her youth had come to an end in "convulsions and groans," she became "plunged in the ideas of socialism." She wore men's clothes and smoked. She professed passion and made a religion of love. Her early works helped to undermine whatever

ideas of conventional morality had been left to the young men of the time. Her mind was essentially subjective, and her novels were as lyrical in sentiment as romantic poetry.

In French painting the romantic revolution was as upsetting as in literature. At the beginning of the century there had been a revival of classicism under David, but it could not stem the rising tide of the romantic desire for freedom from traditions. David himself had rebelled from the embellished style of the rococo and the fashionable furbelows of Boucher and Fragonard, but, though he professed to paint entirely from nature, he unfortunately could not look at nature save in the light of Græco-Roman æsthetics. In seeking the conventionalized form of antique statuary he eliminated movement from his art. His heroes pose and never act. In the paintings of Delacroix, the pre-eminent exponent of romanticism in French painting, action and color are the distinguishing characteristics. Romantic painters drew their inspiration from the Middle Ages, from modern history, and from the Orient rather than from classical mythology. Delacroix had been preceded by Géricault, who died before romanticism had actually declared war on classicism, but whose

Raft of the Medusa belongs clearly to the romantic school. The distorted, starving figures crowded on the shipwrecked raft represent a horrible picture of human suffering. The very degree of distortion of the human body and the way detail is piled on detail, points directly to the excesses of the romantic imagination. Yet it was not until Delacroix's *Massacre of Scio* that the academic critics began to talk about the " massacre of painting." Delacroix loaded his palette with brilliant colors and painted with the unrestrained vigor of a revolutionist. He hated straight, wavy, and especially parallel lines, and tried to make his painting turbulent and rough—it was called the painting of a " drunken brush." It had the main romantic traits of disregarding tradition and emphasizing individual emotion. Gautier says that Delacroix " responded more than anyone else to the fever of his epoch." Gautier also says, " Dans son oeuvre, Delacroix a toujours cherché le signe caractéristique, le trait de passion, le geste significatif, la note étrange et rare."

At this particular period, poets and artists belonged to the same romantic brotherhood. The artists read the poets and the poets visited the artists. Shakspere, Dante, Goethe, Byron,

and Scott were found as frequently in the atelier as in the study. Deveria, from whom much was hoped by the advocates of romantic painting, distinguished himself by the frenzy of his applause at the tumultuous performance of *Ernani*, where he led a band of artists and students.

The influence of Rousseau was not limited to France but extended over the whole of Europe. In Germany the " Sturm und Drang " period of the end of the eighteenth century was followed at the beginning of the nineteenth, by one of the most extraordinary ebullitions of the romantic movement. The romantic school in Germany was characterised by a hopeless confusion of genres and of ideas. Someone has said that studying the romantic movement in Germany is like running into a fog bank It was marked by an excessive use of symbolism and weird fantasy. The fantastic element was especially marked in the works of E. T. A. Hoffmann, who became very popular in France, through translations, in the 1820's. The characters of his weird tales were so grotesque that Hoffmann was accused of being either insane or under the influence of opium. In him German romantic literature and music were brought into connection, one with the

other. He was a well-known composer as well as a story-teller and critic, and one of the leading exponents of the theory of music as the ideal romantic art.

This idea was common among the German romanticists from Wackenroder and Jean Paul Richter to Tieck and Hoffmann. They all harped on the theory that romantic literature should strive to attain the suggestive, indefinite quality of music. It is one of the most striking differences between French and German romanticism, that in France the boundaries of the different arts never became so confused as in Germany. In some ways, of course, the German conception of music as inherently the most romantic of the arts, brought the literary movement there into closer touch with the romantic movement in music. But after all, romanticism in music does not depend upon the æsthetic theories of poets, but upon the inspiration of composers influenced by romantic ideas.

Music in Germany was, moreover, more intimately connected with the life of the people than in France. That is the reason why Romain Rolland has called the Germans a more musical race than the French, much to the chagrin of his compatriots. He does not say

that the Germans have more musical discrimination, but merely acknowledges the fact that music has grown in Germany to be an integral part of the national life, from peasant to noble, as it has never been in France. It was partly a result of the democratic status of music in Germany that Italian opera which pandered to the dilettantism of fashionable society was not as popular as in France.

German tendencies both in music and literature strongly affected the course of the romantic movement in France. In music the influence was exerted through the performances of the works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Weber. Knowledge of particular phases of German literary romanticism was spread through the writings of Mme. de Staël. Schlegel's *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Litteratur* were translated into French in 1814, and before 1830 translations of many of the most important works of the German romantic school had appeared, including two versions of *Faust*. The general influence of German romanticism in France, both in music and in literature was in developing the qualities of poetic imagination and fantasy.

From England came the influences of Scott and Byron. Both were read tremendously in

translation and in the original. Scott's influence joined with Chateaubriand's in stimulating the historical and pictorial imagination, and in emphasizing picturesqueness and local color. His stories were like the large luxuriantly colored canvases of the romantic painters. Byron was more radically and powerfully revolutionary in sentiment, and consequently more truly romantic. Byron was a superman with an irresistible instinct for revolt against everything. Goethe said that he showed no respect for any law human or divine, except the law of the three unities. He was considered the supreme example of romantic despair and haughty isolation, theatrically conceived. The famous lines of Matthew Arnold from *The Grand Chartreuse* picture him perfectly.

> " What helps it now, that Byron bore,
> With haughty scorn that mock'd the smart,
> Through Europe to the Aetolian shore
> The pageant of his bleeding heart ?
> That thousands counted every groan,
> And Europe made his woe her own ? "

He played an important part in the rise of romantic socialism, though his works did not appeal particularly to real social theorists like Saint-Simon, Fourier, Pierre Leroux and Prudhomme.

In studying the tendencies of the romantic

movement which either found expression in music or influenced the course of its development, it is interesting to note that, in France, the leaders of the romantic movement generally speaking, gave little thought to any peculiarly romantic quality in music and felt no special sympathy with the art. The literatures of all countries contain a number of stock phrases in which music is referred to metaphorically — as the "music of the spheres" or "of nature." From Plato down to the present day, music has been used in a vague and indefinite way to explain or supplement ideas of philosophy, religion, art, and even science Burton in the *Anatomy of Melancholy* spends much space in explaining *Music, a Remedy*. This sort of thing is generally quite superficial and has had no important relation to the progress of music. On the other hand, there have been writers, like Browning or Balzac, whose use of musical subjects and musical similes, based on real technical knowledge, help at least in the study of certain of its psychological aspects. There have been still others, like Jean Paul and E. T. A. Hoffmann, whose conceptions of the functions of music must be taken into account in the historical study of the evolution of the art.

Of the leaders in French romanticism only a few showed any decided interest in music. Rousseau again stands out as an anticipator of romantic developments in music. He, himself, was a composer of no mean ability, though his conception of the powers of music soared far beyond his powers of musical creation. His *Pygmalion*, in which music alternates with words, is a curious attempt to solve the operatic problem. *Le Devin du village*, an *intermède*, in one act, held the stage for three-quarters of a century. But it was Rousseau's theory of music which was important. He had extraordinary insight into the nature and effect of music. In his *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, published after his death, he wrote, "sleep, stillness of night, loneliness, even silence, may be painted by music. The composer will not present such scenes directly but he will call up in our souls the same impressions which we receive from the real scenes." Again in the *Examen de deux principes avancés par M. Rameau*, published in 1764, he expressed the main argument of all harmonic reformers when he said, "What is pleasurable to the ear is the result of custom." Briefly, what Rousseau stands for in musical æsthetics is emotional impressionism. He thought of music as

primarily and essentially lyrical. A more detailed discussion of his theories of musical expression will be taken up in the second chapter, in the account of the literary battles in the eighteenth century over the relative merits of French and Italian opera.

No one, before Balzac, comprehended as clearly as Rousseau the romantic possibilities of music. The cosmopolitan Mme. de Staël gave little thought to music in spite of the fact that music has been so frequently called the "universal language." Chateaubriand, too, whose use of words is so pre-eminently musical, had little sympathy for the art of music itself. Lamartine called music "the literature of the heart," and he seems to have recognized that romantic attribute of music—its indefiniteness. This was the peculiar quality of his own poetry. Trying to describe an ideal language, he said that it should be "vague, éclairé, flamboyant, caressant comme des langues de feu." Lamartine found in the music of Liszt's improvisations the perfect medium for the expression of the infinite, and of the indeterminate longing of the romantic soul. He influenced Liszt in developing in music freedom of expression, as against formality. Musset and Sand had more than the average sympathy for music without,

however, understanding its romantic possibilities. Hugo's interest as shown in the seven stanzas of *Que la musique* is only the superficial interest of poets in borrowing the symbolism of musical terms.

Balzac, on the other hand, demonstrated in *Gambara*, *Massimilla Doni*, and other works, his keen understanding of music and the psychology of the musician. In *Gambara* there is the conception of music as an intensely expressive and descriptive language. Balzac understands and explains the efforts of romantic composers to get away from colorless conventionality, from meaningless designs, and to make music more descriptive of special moods and situations. He adopts in Gambara the same fantastic idea of music that we find in Hoffmann's *Kater Murr*. Gambara is a second Kreisler, a creature entirely at the mercy of his ungovernable artistic temperament. It is but the exaggeration of the " original genius " idea of Rousseau, and is true to the musical life of the day. It seems as if Gambara must have been drawn from Berlioz and with a foreknowledge of Wagner and Richard Strauss. Balzac's writings were influential in spreading the gospel of musical romanticism.

Saint-Simonianism affected the position of

music in society, in that it exalted music as one of the chief means to general cultivation. Liszt, as will be seen later, was much influenced by this attitude of the Saint-Simonians towards music.

The general tendencies of the romantic movement spread very rapidly to music on account of the growing intimacy between musicians and other artists. The friendly intercourse may be noted here of Berlioz, Liszt, and Chopin, with Hugo, Musset, Sand, Balzac, Lamennais, and Delacroix.

In French romantic literature, in sharp contrast to German literature as has been shown, there was little inclination to distinguish music as the most romantic of the arts. It was partly because French poets did not feel that, in order to express the infinite, all definiteness of expression must be lost and only suggestion and impression left. The indeterminate longing, " le vague des passions," was certainly a strong element in French romantic thought, but the French romanticists never lost themselves in quite such a misty philosophy as the Germans. Then again, the French instinct for the *genres tranchés* took for granted the limitations of the different arts and avoided the confused mixture of poetic and musical symbols which is seen in German romantic poetry.

The fundamental romantic tendencies have been noticed in the foregoing survey of the general romantic movement. It was noted at the start that those changes in thought which had an æsthetic rather than a political significance would naturally find a more definite expression in an art which is primarily a language of emotion rather than of thought. The chief cause for the rise of the romantic spirit was found in the revolt from the extreme formality of the pseudo-classic epoch. Consequently the revolutionary spirit which upsets and disregards traditions is everywhere apparent. Rousseau stood for the exaltation of individual emotionalism over rationalism. From this grew the tendencies towards lyricism, egoism and eccentricity. Chateaubriand's emphasis on picturesqueness and color led to the cult for the strange and the exotic. "Le vague des passions" grew into the malady of the age, egoistic melancholy and romantic nostalgia. The fantastical tendency of the romantic school in Germany and the rebellious trend of the Byronic cult, added their forces to the growing current of romanticism in France.

II

THE PRECURSORS OF MUSICAL ROMANTICISM

Pseudo-classicism emphasized the principle of imitation rather than invention. Pseudo-classic literature was absorbed in following the models of the past. Music, on the other hand, during the pseudo-classic period of French literature, was undergoing the most radical technical changes as a result of the discovery at the end of the sixteenth century of the principles of homophonic composition upon which all modern music is based. Composers were, naturally, as much interested in developing these new principles as in perfecting the established contrapuntal forms. French dramatists of the eighteenth century followed as closely as possible the traditions of Corneille and Racine, but the composers of the same period had no such perfect models to help them in working out the new forms of choral and instrumental composition. The methods of musical composition were changing with every generation. The changes were shown both in the steady development of the homophonic

sense, that is, the ability to look at music vertically, as a succession of chords with one melody, instead of horizontally, as a combination of melodic strands, and also in the growth of musical forms such as the operatic aria and the instrumental sonata which were more adapted to the use of the homophonic style. The scientific principles of harmony which underlie all musical progress since the seventeenth century were only just beginning to be accurately defined by the theorists of the eighteenth. It was not until 1722 that Rameau, the most important theorist of his time, published his discovery of the principle of chord inversions. From 1722 onward he brought out a series of treatises which, though containing many fundamental errors in harmonic theory, present important theoretical discoveries.

Bach and Handel, the greatest musical figures of the age, though strongly influenced by the modern tendencies of the Italian operatic school of monodic composition, represented in the main the continuation of the polyphonic style of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. The later eighteenth century composers did not think of looking to them for their models because they were following a different direction in the evolution of musical composition.

Burney, writing of Bach's most famous son, Karl Philipp Emanuel Bach, said, "How he formed his style would be difficult to trace; he certainly neither inherited nor adopted it from his father who was his only master."* He also remarks that K. P. E. Bach "spoke irreverently of canons, which, he said, were dry and despicable pieces of pedantry, that anyone might compose who would sacrifice his time to them." Handel showed more distinctly than Bach the Italian influence; in such works as his violin sonatas we find in the accompaniments a definite use of the homophonic style. Both Bach and Handel employed the figured bass, which implies the harmonic rather than the polyphonic style. Their importance in the history of the evolution of the new style in either instrumental or operatic forms, however, is almost negligible in comparison with the importance, from this point of view, of many minor composers of the eighteenth century. Bach stands primarily for the culmination of the fugal forms of composition, and Handel for the perfection of choral writing on a polyphonic basis, as exemplified by the choruses of his oratorios.

An art which was so much in the process of

* Burney: *Present State of Music in Germany, etc.*

changing technically, or rediscovering itself, could hardly put much emphasis on traditions of form and style. The opposition between romantic and classic principles in the second half of the eighteenth and even the first decades of the nineteenth centuries was a much less clearly defined issue in music than in literature. Consequently the romantic movement in music may be described as less of a reaction and more of a growth. The evolution of the technical principles of modern musical composition confused the issue. Yet it must have been the pseudo-classic spirit of the age which accounted for the astoundingly rapid spread of the Italian operatic style which, during the eighteenth century, exerted its insidious influence all over Europe. The entire force of the later romantic movement did not succeed in breaking away from it until the acceptance of the Wagnerian music-drama, which was the culmination of the romantic movement in music. The discussion of the relative merits of French and Italian operatic music was an obsession of the eighteenth century. Should dramatic music be expressive or melodious? Does truthful expression exclude beautiful melody? Should harmony be preferred to melody in the accompaniment? These were the great

questions of French musical criticism in the eighteenth century.

By the end of the seventeenth century Cambert and Lully had developed in France a chaste and restrained style of musical expression suitable for courtly ballet and masque and for opera with severely classical texts. As colorless as their productions seem now, Lully, at least, had the force to develop more than his predecessors the capability of music to follow the declamation of the text; though interested primarily in the scenic effect, he succeeded in giving his operas considerable dignity of musical expression. The courtly style of Lully was carried on in instrumental music by Couperin. Influenced, like Lully, by the ballet, his compositions are cast in the simple dance forms Many of his pieces have titles as if they were intended to be character sketches, *The Working Woman*, *The Gloomy One*, *The Flatterer*, or nature pictures, *The Bees*, *The Grasshoppers*, and *The Nightingale in Love*, but the titles merely serve to emphasize the simple, placid objectivity of the music. There is almost no emotional quality in the music and the interest in nature is fanciful rather than sympathetic.

Though it followed no tradition, music of

the early eighteenth century showed many of the traits of pseudo-classic literature and art. It was not an imitation of models, because it had no models to imitate. Of course the founders of the opera in 1600 thought they were imitating the Greek drama. Though they were mistaken in their idea of Greek drama, their intentions, at any rate, were pseudo-classic. In Couperin's music there was the same conscious artificiality in handling the then known resources of the art of music as there was in contemporary literature and art. At their best, these first experimenters in modern music attained a simple, straight-forward objectivity of expression. The decorative element obtained over the emotional though the latter was not entirely lacking. Classic restraint was the dominating characteristic of the early French composers.

Rameau was the greatest French composer of the eighteenth century and as it was under his standard that the partisans of French music first gathered to wage war on the exponents of Italian music, it is important to understand the main characteristics of his music. Rameau has already been mentioned for his importance as a theorist. His command of the science of composition is shown in the greater solidity of his music as compared to that of Couperin and

Lully. There is in it much more actual musical material. In this respect it was much more like contemporary German music which still clung to the polyphonic ideals of the preceding centuries. His operas, instead of being valued for the harmonic originality of the accompaniments, were severely criticised because they contained more than mere melodies. The followers of Lully declared them to be " bizarre, baroque, et dépourvu de mélodie." It was a typical eighteenth century criticism. Burney took the same point of view when he wrote of Bach, ". . . that venerable musician, though unequalled in learning and contrivance, thought it so necessary to crowd into both hands, all the harmony he could grasp, that he must inevitably have sacrificed melody and expression."* Rameau, also, to the distress of his critics, spoiled his scores by putting in interesting orchestral effects and giving more importance to the separate instrumental parts. It was a tendency towards what the French call the *symphonie instrumentale* in operatic composition.

Rameau aimed at dramatic expressiveness as opposed to the purely lyric quality of Italian opera, and, to a certain degree, he attained it.

* Burney: *Present State of Music in Germany, etc.*, 2nd edition, 1775, Vol. II., p. 263.

His work was hampered very much by his lack of discrimination in accepting any libretto which was offered to him. He went so far as to say he could set to music the *Gazette de Hollande*. His great fault was that he considered music, with most of the æstheticians of the eighteenth century, an imitative art, and held that it was based on a mechanical system of harmony.

No more illuminating example of the conflict of artistic ideas in the middle of the eighteenth century could be imagined than the essay by Rousseau entitled, *Examen de deux principes avancés par M. Rameau dans la brochure intitulée : Erreurs sur la musique dans l'Encyclopédie*. Though not published until 1764, it was nine years earlier, in 1755, that Rousseau had written this defence of the articles on music which he had contributed to the great encyclopedia of Diderot and d'Alembert. In striking contrast to Rameau, Rousseau had had the most haphazard musical education, and, though he had done considerable reading in preparing these musical articles for the encyclopedia and had achieved a popular success in Paris in 1752 with his opera *Le devin du village*, he was anything but a well-grounded musician. Yet this extraordinary man seemed to have the same instinct for recognizing the fundamental

principles of the art of musical expression that he had shown in writing about social and political questions of the day, and with as little real knowledge on which to base his reasoning.

The two main assertions of Rameau,* contradicted by Rousseau in the essay mentioned above, are, that melody is less important than harmony from which it is derived, and that "the fundamental essential of music, as of all arts and sciences, is proportion." To refute the first of these typically academic assertions, Rousseau cleverly points out that often the most expressive notes in a melody do not belong to the chords which accompany them. He claims that "harmony is only the general basis of music. Melody alone constitutes its character and the Italians should be credited with having created in place of harmony and tonality, the real music of the present age."

The second assertion of Rameau that "the fundamental essential of music is proportion," represents that objective attitude on the part of the composer which values beauty of design and form more than emotional expression and which decrees that these qualities must be

* Rameau: *Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique et sur son principe; ou les moyens de reconnaître l'un par l'autre conduisant à pouvoir se rendre raison avec certitude des différens effets de cet art.*

attained by following certain definite models and standards. It is the attitude which emphasizes decorum, the sense of what is right and wrong according to established conventions. It was from just such ideas in life and art that Rousseau revolted. Above everything else he prized the spontaneity of genius. The "original genius" of Rousseau was a genius freed from the restraints of conventionality and custom, whose individual inspiration was the only guide for his method of emotional expression. The following passage describes his own method of composition. "Les idées de musique et d'opéra me revinrent, et, dans les transports de ma fièvre, je composai des chants, des duos, des choeurs. Je suis certain d'avoir fait deux ou trois morceaux *di prima intenzione*, dignes peut-être de l'admiration des maîtres s'ils avaient pu les entendre exécuter. Oh! si l'on pouvait tenir registre des rêves d'un fièvreux, quelles grandes et sublimes choses on verrait sortir quelque fois de son délire!"

The controversy between these two representative men of the eighteenth century reflects the general contest between form and imagination as the controlling element in art. Someone may say that Rousseau was no musician and

only represents the literary romantic point-of-view. The list of his compositions would be enough to refute this statement, not to mention the fact, already noted in the first chapter and which Tiersot points out in explaining the inclusion of a book on Rousseau in the series called *Les Maîtres de la musique*, that one of Rousseau's musical works, *Le devin du village*, was performed on the French stage for the greater part of a century.

One other quotation from Rousseau, perhaps the most remarkable of his utterances on the æsthetics of music, is worth giving here, as it clearly anticipates much which we find in the famous prefaces of Gluck and paves the way for the Wagnerian theory of the union of the three arts. It was in the consideration of this very question that Rousseau wrote the following passage in his *Dictionary of Music* under the heading *Opéra :** " C'est un des grands avantages du musicien de pouvoir peindre les choses qu'on ne saurait entendre, et le plus grand prodige d'un art qui n'a d'activité que par ses mouvements est d'en pouvoir former jusqu'à l'image du repos. Le sommeil, le calme de la nuit, la solitude, et le silence même,

* This passage from the *Dictionary* is almost literally reproduced from the sixteenth chapter of the *Essay on the Origin of Language* quoted in the first chapter.

entrent dans le nombre des tableaux de la musique : quelquefois le bruit produit l'effet du silence, et le silence l'effet du bruit . . . Cet art a des substitutions plus fertiles ; il sait exciter par un sens les émotions semblables à celles qu'on peut exciter par un autre. Que toute la nature soit endormie, celui qui la contemple ne dort pas, et l'art du musicien consiste à substituer à l'image insensible de l'objet celle des mouvements que sa présence excite dans l'esprit du spectateur."

Rousseau admired the Italians' recognition of the emotional power of melody. That he was aware of the undramatic qualities of Italian opera, of the artificial conventionalities and the weakness for vocal display, is shown in a letter which he wrote to the famous Dr. Burney in 1776. He points out that true melodic expression is dramatic, while vocal display is merely sensuous and essentially undramatic. He says that the aria should be used for climaxes of feeling ; duets, only occasionally, in moments of excitement, and that the chorus is unimportant ; the ballet must express something appropriate to the action, and the orchestra must supply variety of background. The whole should be a perfect union of painting, music, and poetry.

Rousseau's ideas of the peculiar expressive powers of music, as distinguished from other arts, make him an important precursor of romanticism; but he was incapable musically of putting his theories into practice. Gluck, on the other hand, from his acceptance of the principle of imitation, was theoretically classical; but the revolutionary nature of his reforms and the individuality and expressive quality of his music, contradict his theories of imitation and clearly fore-shadow the more independent and personal style of the romanticists.

This quarrel between Rousseau and Rameau leads to a discussion of the controversy over the relative merits of Italian and French music. Even in the seventeenth century the cleavage between the two schools had shown itself. The first half of the eighteenth found the *Lullistes* ranged against Rameau, but the *guerre des bouffons* in 1752 forced a coalition between the *Lullistes* and the *Ramistes* in self-defence against the invasion of the Neapolitan opera.

It is strange to find Rousseau, in this dispute, on the side which was taken almost unanimously by the literary classicists of the time. Among those who supported the Italians were La Harpe and Marmontel, narrow-minded and conventional, the witty and cynical Mme. du

Deffand, a typical blue-stocking, and the materialistic philosopher, Condillac. It seems more natural to find Holbach, the sensualist, on the same side with Rousseau. Their opponents were the independents, Suard and Arnaud, philosophers with sociological tendencies like Beaumarchais, and women of feeling like Mme. de Lespinasse and those of calmer judgment like Mme. de Genlis. The predominance, among the advocates of Italian opera, of literary men with little knowledge of music, looks very much as if they were attracted by its popular style and lack of complexity, and repelled by the original harmonic structure and more highly developed orchestration of French opera. With Rousseau, his *amour propre* may have added its influence to the reasons given in his musical writings; he knew that his own music could bear no comparison with the really masterly work of Rameau and Gluck.

Though, as Newman remarks,* there had been in France "none of the sensuous lyrical outpouring that had so strangely and so rapidly transformed the Italian opera," the influence of Rameau from 1733, the date of the first performance of his *Hippolyte et Aricie*, to the

* Newman: *Gluck and the Opera*, p. 220.

sensational appearance of Gluck in 1774, had made a great change in French opera. The change had shown itself not only in greater truthfulness of dramatic expression and in a development of the recitative, which at times approached in pathos the quality of the recitative of Gluck, but also, most noticeably, in the development of the purely musical qualities of opera,—variety of rhythm and harmony, and the extension of the resources of the orchestral accompaniment. Against these latter qualities of French music the critics opposed the clearness and simplicity, as well as lyric beauty, of Italian opera.

Clearness was, indeed, the single criterion of musical criticism in the eighteenth and first part of the nineteenth centuries, and, in fact, continued to be so until musical criticism was written by men like Berlioz who were not disturbed by complexity of construction in musical composition. Martine* wrote, "The greatest merit in an accompaniment consists in obliterating itself." Much of the opposition to Gluck's so-called "unmusical" style may be explained by this narrow standard of criticism. When Gluck wins in the battle against Piccinni and the Italian opera, La Harpe says, "Notre

* Martine: *De la Musique dramatique en France*, 1813.

nation a la tête dramatique et n'a pas l'oreille musicale," as if there was no real music in Gluck's operas! This statement can be analyzed from different points of view. Gluck was striving above all else for dramatic truth and to attain it he had to break down the blind prejudices of a public which applauded the empty conventionalities of Italian opera; he had to repress the vanity and egotism of the singers, in order to give to the aria and the recitative their proper places in the dramatic scheme; he endeavoured to purge the opera of its excrescences, to make the orchestral accompaniment, and the overture vital, and to make the whole dramatic and coherent. The Parisian public recognized the value of these reforms. They showed, as La Harpe said, their dramatic sense, but were they less musical for doing so? La Harpe, in preferring the insipid vocal ornamentation and childishly simple orchestral accompaniment of Italian opera, rather showed himself to be lacking in both musical and dramatic sense. If Gluck, in writing his operas, had been able to "forget he was a musician," as he said he tried to do, he might have left the dramatic but unmusical operas La Harpe judged him to have written. The Piccinnists attacked what

Marmontel called Gluck's "harsh and rugged harmony, the incoherent modulations, mutilations and incongruities contained in his airs." Gluck's own point of view is expressed in the closing sentence of the preface to the score of *Alceste*, performed in Vienna in 1767,—"I also thought that my chief endeavor should be to attain a grand simplicity, and consequently I have avoided making a parade of difficulties at the cost of clearness; I have set no value on novelty as such, unless it was naturally suggested by the situation and suited to the expression; in short there was no rule which I did not consider myself bound to sacrifice for the sake of effect."

In his theory of the relation of music to poetry Gluck seemed to deny all subjectivity on the part of the composer. Music must be subservient to the text. It could only color the pictures presented on the stage and intensify the feelings already aroused by the words. It was based, as had been the music of Rameau, on the principle of the imitation of the other arts or of nature. "Music that does not paint is only noise and gives no more pleasure than a disorderly well-sounding succession of words," said d'Alembert. Gluck seems to have reverted to the theories of such early pseudo-

classic eighteenth century æstheticians as Du Bos* who states, " The first principles, therefore, of music are the same as those of poetry and of painting. Music like the other two arts, is an imitation ; and it cannot be of any value unless it conforms to the general rules of these two arts as to the choice of its subjects, its probability, and other matters."

It is a great mistake, however, particularly in considering eighteenth century music, to judge a composer by his theories rather than by his music. On this basis Rousseau's *Le Devin du village* would have to be considered as the starting point of romanticism in French music ; but Rousseau's opera only proves his incapability of putting into practice his ideas of the peculiar expressive properties of music as distinguished from the other arts Gluck, on the contrary, judged by his theories was a typical classicist. His music, however, contradicts his theories and clearly foreshadows the more expressive and individual style of the romanticists.

Gluck's influence passed in a direct line through Méhul and Spontini to Berlioz, to whom he was the " Jupiter of his musical

* Du Bos : *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, Vol. I., sec. 45.

Olympus." Have we not reason to find in Gluck's music one of the chief sources of musical romanticism? If so, this may be said to be due to the inherent qualities of his music considered apart from its operatic function, in his use of extraordinarily dramatic effects of orchestration, in the pathetic quality of his melodies, in fact in those particular qualities which could be developed in instrumental music outside the theatre as well as within. Gluck was a developer of the means of pure musical expression as well as a reformer of dramatic truthfulness in opera.

To summarize, the struggle between Italian and French music was a struggle between two tendencies, the one striving merely to please the ear with sensuous melody and to avoid complexity by the use of the simplest harmonic background, and the other, emphasizing dramatic expressiveness and the development of the instrumental accompaniment. The influence of the Italian school was largely responsible for the musical dilettantism of the first quarter of the nineteenth century in Paris. Its artificiality was antithetical to the spirit of romanticism. Its superficial emotionalism was adapted by Rossini and Meyerbeer to the purposes of romantic opera. The influence

of Gluck, on the other hand, is found wherever the true spirit of musical romanticism asserts itself, in the compositions of Lesueur, the operas of Méhul and Spontini, and, above all, in the works of Berlioz. Consequently we can consider Gluck as the great eighteenth century precursor of French musical romanticism.

The chief followers of Gluck in France were Salieri, Méhul and Spontini. Salieri is less important than the two others though his *Danaïdes* was still being performed when Berlioz first came to Paris. He had inherited a sense of dramatic unity and proportion from Gluck but his operas lack the originality of his master. He lived comparatively little in Paris and his name and influence are much more closely connected with the development of music in Germany, especially in Vienna.

Méhul, almost as extreme an enthusiast for Gluck as Berlioz was after him, carried on Gluck's operatic ideas with an ardour which, for a while at least, impeded sensibly the rising tide of Italianism. In *Uthal* (1806) and *Joseph* (1807), his last and most important operas, he developed those musical features most characteristic of Gluck's operatic style. He carried to a greater extent than any composer before him the

suggestion of local color. In *Uthal* he dispensed entirely with the violins in order to bring out, by means of the continuous use of the violas, the weird and melancholy character of the Ossianic subject. In *Mélidore et Phrosine* four horns accompany the voice of a dying man with a kind of smothered rattle. Compared with other contemporary French or Italian operas, the music of *Josef* strikes one at once with its more serious musicianly character. Everywhere among the followers of Gluck we find this interest in the development of other than melodic means of musical expression. Méhul's style was in reality not much more complex than the style of the popular Italian opera of his day but it was more sincere and more musically interesting. It aimed at being dramatically realistic rather than merely suave and pleasing.

Spontini's music followed the Gluck tradition less strictly. He did not escape the influence of the glittering conventionalities of the Italians, though his ardent nature and exuberant imagination were worthy of the romantic generation which followed him. *La Vestale* (1807), *Fernand Cortez* (1809), and *Olympie* (1819) had much of the truth of expression, depth of passion, and highly individualised characterisa-

tion which are typical of Gluck's operas. In his operas, as in Gluck's, the dramatic idea predominates over the musical. He did not have the musical genius of Gluck, but he shared with him the grandeur of dramatic expression. The martial pomp, the massive settings and vehement energy, of Spontini's operas, are typical of the romantic tendency towards luxuriance of expression found in Chateaubriand and Victor Hugo. They prepare the way for Rossini's *Guillaume Tell.* Yet Spontini did not have the typically romantic revolutionary nature, nor did he personally feel in sympathy with the consciously romantic music of *Tell*, Auber's *Muette de Portici*, and Halévy's *Juive.* What he really did was to introduce the passionate accent of Italian sensualism into the operatic form left by Gluck and Méhul. From the point of view of correct declamation and pathetic recitative, the use of suggestive orchestral color, and the vigor of dramatic conception, he shows the influence of the French school; but the voluptuosity of his melodic material and warmth of passionate expression were directly inspired by his Neapolitan masters.

The tradition of Gluck was thus continued by Méhul and Spontini in the face of the ever

persistent appeal of Italian opera down to the 1820's when the storm of the romantic revolt broke out in full force. In the meantime the influence of the other forms of French opera, of independent composers like Lesueur and Cherubini, and the growing influence of German music on French taste, must be taken into consideration in forming an estimate of the condition of French music at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The distinction between *opéra* and *opéra-comique* in the middle of the eighteenth century was nearly what the names themselves signify —serious opera and light opera—but later the term *opéra-comique* was used merely to designate opera in which there was spoken dialogue, and in no way suggested the character of the text or music. Serious operas like Monsigny's *Déserteur*, Grétry's *Richard Cœur de Lion*, Dalayrac's *Nina*, Méhul's *Stratonice* and *Joseph* and Cherubini's *Les deux journées* fall into the category of *opéra-comique* for the mechanical reason that they contained spoken dialogue.

There were certain circumstances, however, in the origin and early growth of the *opéra-comique* which established it as a distinct *genre* in French operatic composition. *Opéra-comique* appeared in its earliest forms in the open

air, at the fairs and in the market places. In the *théâtre de la foire* it shared a place with the itinerant juggler. It developed naturally the witty dialogue of light comedy and the popular *chanson*. It was an out-growth of the *vaudeville*, and at first the action was interrupted hardly more than by an occasional song. Not until Dauvergne's *Les Troqueurs* in 1753 was there any complete musical scheme. *Les Troqueurs*, however, following the representation of Pergolesi's *La Serva padrona* in Paris the year before, was written in imitation of the Italian *intermèdes*, and contained recitatives to connect some of the separate numbers. Duni, Philidor, Monsigny, and Grétry carried on the development of the *opéra-comique* through the eighteenth century, and Dalayrac, Méhul, Berton, Catel, Nicolo, and Boieldieu carried it down to the romantic revolt. The great majority of the works of these composers are in the vein of light comedy. They are characterised by *verve* and *esprit*. They are full of delightful, charming melodies. The orchestration is simple and direct and the effects clear and sparkling. Such a style could have little effect on the broader musical tendencies of the times. It was only when the dramatic situation came to be treated more

completely as in Grétry's *Richard Cœur de Lion* that the importance of *opéra-comique* in the musical evolution of the day, is apparent. Méhul's operas, though technically in the class of *opéra-comique*, had none of the typical qualities of the comic *genre*. Catel treated the *opéra-comique* form in a still different manner, his works being so academic in their musical structure that they were criticised as being "trop savant." Boieldieu, in *Le Calife de Bagdad*, *Jean de Paris* (1812), and *La Dame Blanche* (1825), restored to *opéra-comique* the vivacity and *esprit* of the earlier composers, adding to them a highly colored and brilliant orchestral background. The *genre*, as a whole, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, shows that it was influenced by the tendencies of the time in the use of local color and in attempting more definite musical characterisation. But only when *opéra-comique* discarded the light and elegant style of comedy, and adopted the serious character of *opéra*, as in Méhul's works, Auber's *La Muette de Portici*, and Hérold's *Zampa*, did it take any active part in the growth of musical romanticism.

Two important figures in the development of French music, Lesueur, a Frenchman,

and Cherubini, an Italian, must be considered separately, as their compositions have certain qualities which prevent their being classified under the headings of either French or Italian opera. Lesueur's theoretical writings give his work a special significance, and Cherubini's serious contrapuntal style in both operatic and religious music distinguishes itself clearly from the conventional style of his Italian contemporaries.

Lesueur's *Exposé d'une musique une, imitative, et particulière à chaque solennité* was published in 1787 as a defence of the oratorios which he had composed as *maître de chapelle* for the choir of Notre-Dame. His idea was simply to apply to church music the imitative principle in the operas of Gluck. He held that the character of the music should vary appropriately with the different festivals of the church year and also that it should reflect as dramatically and accurately as possible the Latin text of the Biblical narrative which it accompanied. As at the appearance of Gluck's daring innovations in opera, Lesueur's bold experiments in religious *program music* aroused violent opposition and a literary battle ensued. He was charged with degrading the cathedral service into a *beggar's opera* ("opéra des gueux").

The *Exposé* is only one of a series of essays which Lesueur published and his published works represent only a small part of his theoretical writings. He was distinctly a propagandist, as Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner, all more or less kindred spirits, were after him. To Lesueur all music must be imitative, characteristic, and logical; it must have poetry, painting, and expressiveness, and finally it must have a descriptive program. Pure music did not exist for Lesueur. Words, recited or sung, pantomime, or a printed program, must accompany music if music was to mean anything. Lesueur was very profuse in the explanations of his compositions. He wrote interminable prefaces to his operas and went into the greatest detail in explaining to the actors the exact gestures they should use when not singing, in order to make the music clearly understandable. This was what Lesueur called the *pantomime hypocritique*—the relating of music not only with the words which it accompanied but with every movement of the actor. It was, in a sense, but a continuation of the theories of Gluck.

Lesueur's hobby was the study of ancient music, and from this arose one of the most important features in his music and in his

theoretical writings—the recognition of the old Greek modes as a possible means of modern musical expression and the consequent tendency to combat any fixed conventions of harmonic style. This idea of harmonic freedom was inherited by his pupil, Berlioz, to whose discipleship Lesueur owes his chief importance in the history of the romantic movement.

Lesueur should also be credited with having suggested to Berlioz the idea of the characteristic theme to be used in different parts of a composition for dramatic or programmatic purposes. He was one of the earliest theorists, if not the first, to state definitely the principle of the *idée fixe* and the *leitmotif*. He also anticipated Berlioz in the simultaneous use of several orchestras. In organizing a festival in the *Temple de Mars* he employed four orchestras, as Méhul, the year before, had used three, and as Berlioz, later and in the same place, used five. Lesueur's most successful opera *Ossian ou les Bardes* reflects the literary romantic tendencies of the day in its choice of subject, but Hervey* finds it "formally constructed, cold and lifeless." Though less interesting than his theories, Lesueur's music contains picturesque attempts at program music,

* Hervey: *French Music in the XIXth Century.*

original harmonic effects produced by the use of old modes and an occasional folk-melody or an oriental chant to suggest some special idea in the text.

Coquard thinks that Lesueur has been much overrated by conventional historians like Lavoix who says, "Spontini fut le dernier classique de l'ancienne école, Lesueur fut le premier romantique de la nouvelle, . . . moins ému, mais plus élevé que Méhul, moins abondant, mais plus pittoresque et plus profondément dramatique que Spontini, il est toujours lui-même."* Lesueur's claim for recognition in the romantic movement rests on the originality of his theoretical writings and the unacademic character of his teaching, which exerted itself through his pupil, Berlioz.

Cherubini, an Italian, made his home in Paris from 1788 until he died, in 1842, and through his activity both as a composer and a teacher was an important figure in French musical life at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Like Lesueur he composed both for the church and the stage. Before coming to Paris he was engaged chiefly in the composition of light Neapolitan operas and of motets and masses *à la Palestrina*. His operas

* Lavoix: *La musique française.*

composed during the first twenty years of his life in Paris under the influence of French taste, had a marked success. In his last years he took up again the writing of sacred music and he was very active as director of the *Conservatoire*.

Cherubini became preoccupied with the problems of contrapuntal musical form. Representing, as it did, the traditions of the older Italian polyphonic school, his music was often criticised by the French public of his day, who had long since tired of the academic style of Rameau, as too serious and Teutonic. Not that his music lacked originality, for the unusual harmonic combinations and instrumental effects of *Lodoiska*, brought out in Paris in 1791 were actually startling to his contemporaries. What finally shelved Cherubini's operas in France was the fact that there was too much learning in them to please French taste. *Les deux journées*, produced in 1800, as *Der Wasserträger* had a great success in Germany, exactly because of those solid musicianly qualities which had not been appreciated in France. Indeed, Beethoven esteemed Cherubini above all contemporary composers for the stage. His harmonic and orchestral originality must have had a certain

amount of influence on contemporary composers in France, but as a whole his music was too academic to have any vital connection with the growth of French romanticism. We are not surprised at the antagonism between the youthful Berlioz and the venerable head of the Paris *Conservatoire*.

The part played by Cherubini's music is, from its general character, a link between the dry symphonic style of Gossec and the later instrumental work of Onslow and Reber. It seems strange that Cherubini, with his academic tendencies, should have left of purely instrumental compositions only one symphony and a few string quartets and piano sonatas.

Instrumental music, however, had been much neglected in France during the eighteenth century. The dramatic and literary taste of the people inspired by the great classics of the French stage, had combined with other influences in turning their musical interest almost entirely towards the opera. At the *Concerts Spirituels* purely instrumental compositions were performed as well as choral works with instrumental accompaniment. Not until the middle of the century did the orchestra develop a distinct importance of its own as a medium of musical expression and begin to

resemble in its arrangement the general character of the modern orchestra. A. Vidal* places the *Second Symphony* of Gossec, performed in 1771 at the *Concerts des Amateurs*, as the first symphony played in France which was scored for the regular strings, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, and two horns; but as early as 1754, a symphony by Stamitz scored for horns and oboes had been played at a *Concert Spirituel*, and a year later a symphony by the same composer with horns and clarinets. Gossec was the most prolific French composer of symphonies and string quartets. It is interesting that he was an almost exact contemporary of Haydn. As regards the quality of his work, it was conventional and without depth, like all French music of the eighteenth century not written for the stage.

The reason why the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart held so much greater possibilities for the development of instrumental music than those of Gossec and his followers, is not merely because of their greater inspiration but because Haydn and Mozart, like Bach and other German composers before them, found in non-dramatic music a medium not only for the clear and logical expression of musical ideas, but also for

* A. Vidal, *Les Instruments à archet.*

the play of fantasy and emotion. Might not Mme. de Staël in her *Del' Allemagne* have found in the contrast between the use of pure music in France and Germany an example of the opposition between the rationalistic and the *septentrional* spirit ?

Among the later followers of Gossec in the field of symphonic composition and chamber music were Reicha and Onslow and such musicians as Méhul and Hérold who were not exclusively operatic composers. Like Gossec, they failed to give pure instrumental music anything more than an academic value. When, in 1826, Berlioz joined Reicha's class of composition at the *Conservatoire*, he came to the quick conclusion that he was studying mathematics rather than music. Music was for Reicha a well-proportioned arrangement of musical symbols rather than a combination of notes imagined primarily for the purpose of artistic self-expression.

The greatest service which Gossec rendered to French music was not in the development of symphonic composition but in the part which he took, in 1784, in the founding of the *École royale de chant* which later became the *Conservatoire*. We cannot say that the *Conservatoire* had any great influence in promulgating

the ideas of romanticism in music, for it was under the control, from the beginning, of men like Cherubini, who must be classified as conservative academicians, but it did do much in generally encouraging the development of music in France on a broader basis than merely operatic composition. Few of its professors, with the exception of Lesueur, took any active part in the romantic movement and some of them, like Fétis, were considered as its most dangerous enemies. It was at the *Conservatoire* concerts, however, under the leadership of Habeneck, that the nine Beethoven symphonies were completely performed for the first time in Paris, and this by itself was an important influence in the romantic movement.

What influence had the French Revolution upon music? At first sight it seems as if it had had little more effect than to close the opera houses for a while. Opera of the First Empire was as bound by conventions as before the Revolution. Of all styles the *style Empire* was perhaps the most empty and superficial and whatever signs there were of disagreement with the prevailing taste of the day, were due to the reforms of Gluck and the theories of Lesueur, and to the influence of German music.

Yet, even before the Revolution, in the first

assertion of democratic principles, the place of music in the life of the people was not ignored. Musical conventions were attacked in the desire for freedom from arbitrary laws. In 1791 a writer in *Le Mercure** states : " C'est qu'il n'y a point d'art où les artistes qui le pratiquent fassent moins usage de leur esprit, et sur lequel les gens d'esprit aient moins de connaissance. Depuis cinquante ans, on fait dans toute l'Europe des sonates, des symphonies concertantes, des pièces de clavecin, où l'on retrouve partout le même plan, la même marche, et les mêmes formes. Toute la nouveauté et la variété consistent dans les détails, dans les traits de chant, ou des phrases de mélodie plus ou moins heureuses, dans des combinaisons plus ou moins adroites de l'harmonie et des divers instruments, mais l'ensemble est jeté dans le même moule." The revolutionary spirit asserts itself when the writer goes on to say that " le moment semble venu d'exciter les musicians à abandonner les routes battues et à en chercher de nouvelles, afin d'étendre les limites de l'art." But these revolutionary ideas were not actually carried into effect until the romantic revolt under the leadership of Berlioz. On the other hand the demand of

* Quoted in Laurencie : *Le goût musical en France.*

La Dixmerie*, "Ne pourrait-on y joindre quelques morceaux dans le genre héroïque, morceaux où l'on rappellerait certains événements glorieux à la nation et chers à son souvenir ?" was answered by the production of countless odes and hymns, the bombastic music of which was calculated to suit the patriotic taste of the masses. Lesueur, one of the first to respond to this appeal, wrote the music for an ode by J.-J. Rousseau. The effect of his music on the responsive public of the time was described by the critic of the *Mercure*. "La musique de Lesueur exprime d'une manière nerveuse cette exaltation qui se communique insensiblement dans une grand réunion d'hommes ayant les mêmes sentiments." Is not this demand for an expression of nationalistic spirit a foreshadowing of the more highly developed musical nationalism of Weber's setting of Körner's *Leyer und Schwert* and of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies*? The hymns and odes of the French Revolution were characterized by that appeal of Roman pomp and Roman republicanism which had taken so strong a hold on the popular imagination of the time. They merely parallel the method of David in his painting of such pictures as *The Horatii*, *Brutus*, *The Sabine Women*, and *The*

* La Dixmerie : *Lettres sur l'état présent de nos spectacles.*

Distribution of the Eagles. For the festivals of the First Republic the people wanted music of almost religious character, exalted, pompous, and impressive. It was thought that in these solemn and fervent patriotic hymns music was recurring to its original state as an expression of the common feeling of the people. The people themselves were called upon to take part in the performance of the *Chant du départ*, *la Marseillaise*, and *l'Hymne du* 10 *Août*. Here, indeed, can be seen the most characteristic and important quality of the music of the French Revolution—the use of massive musical effects. Méhul imagined a chorus of 300,000 voices, divided into four armies, to sing the first, third, fifth, and octave of the tonic chord! It was to take part in a *Fête de l'Etre Suprême* and in the final chorus "les trompettes ayant donné le signal, la foule, d'un même élan joignit ses 300,000 voix à celles des musiciens et des représentants, tandis que 200 tambours battaient, et que retentissait une formidable décharge d'artillerie, interprète de la vengeance nationale, annonçant aux républicains que le jour de gloire est arrivé." After this can we be surprised at any of the grandiloquent schemes of Berlioz or the sensationalism of Meyerbeer?

And yet all this music of the First Republic was of an ephemeral character; there was no more than a temporary impulse behind it. The most that can be seen in it of permanent value was what we would call to-day the impulse towards *community music*. This impulse, did, indeed, find a place in the romantic movement and we shall find it very definitely expressed in Liszt's essay in the *Gazette Musicale, de la Situation des artistes*, published in 1835.

To summarize, the fifty years of the pre-romantic period in France from 1774, the date of the first performances of Gluck's *Iphigenie en Aulide* and *Orphée*, to 1824, the date of the first performance in Paris of Weber's *Freischütz* and of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*—these fifty years of musical development have little to show in comparison with the changes which had been taking place in contemporary society and literature. Gluck, an Austrian, though strictly classical in his theory of the relation of music to poetry, stands out as the great precursor of romanticism in French music on account of his completely discarding the artificialities of Italian opera, and particularly because of the specific and individual quality of the emotional element in his music. Méhul, a Frenchman, and Spontini, an Italian, strove to

carry on Gluck's principles in opposition to the light, elegant, piquant style of most of the composers of *opéra-comique* and the degenerate manner of the conventional Italian opera. Lesueur attempted to introduce dramatic characterization into sacred music, and by his progressive theories of composition opened the way for the program symphonies of Berlioz. The academic Cherubini, though an Italian, stood for the more Teutonic ideals of thorough musicianship. Instrumental music scarcely existed. There was in France, at this period, not a single composer like Haydn, Beethoven or Schubert, who was primarily a composer of non-operatic music. Opera, unfortunately, dominated the musical life of the day. The librettos, like that of Lesueur's *Ossian*, were often romantic enough in subject matter, but a romantic libretto with conventional music does not make a romantic opera. When composers like Méhul or Spontini strove to present in their music the poetic melancholy of *Uthal* and the historical picturesqueness of *Fernand Cortez*, they perceptibly extended the horizon of music. They created new effects of orchestration and developed the possibilities of local color. With new orchestral effects came more daring modulations and a feeling that dramatic

truth could overrule the demands of theoretical harmony.

Musical criticism, however, was written by dramatic and literary critics who had little real knowledge of music. However much these critics might sympathize with the liberating current of romanticism in literature, towards music they took an entirely classical attitude in demanding clearness and form regardless of poetic content. In opera the imitative theory of music still persisted. For symphonic music the critics had little interest. Consequently at the time when the ideas of Mme. de Staël and Chateaubriand had come to dominate the spirit of French literature, the possibility of romantic expression in music was hardly yet recognized. The third decade of the nineteenth century in France seemed ill-prepared for the changes in musical ideas which were to come so suddenly upon it both from without and from within.

III

GERMAN INFLUENCES

Up to the end of the eighteenth century French composers were mainly occupied in either opposing, or adjusting themselves to, the importation of Italian opera. Towards the close of the century the powerful force of German instrumental music, which had evolved the sonata, the symphony, and the string quartet, began to be felt in France. The performance, at a *Concert Spirituel* in 1754, of a symphony by Stamitz has been noted in the previous chapter.

Now Stamitz was one of the most important initiators of the change from the classic to the romantic point of view in purely instrumental music. Hugo Riemann* asserts that in this respect he is historically the most important composer of the middle of the 18th century. Riemann points out these distinguishing features in Stamitz' style: a general avoidance of the conventional, pedantic, contrapuntal, and fugal style, a discarding of the figured bass, and a frequent use of dynamic expression. This last

* Riemann, *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte*, II., 3.

characteristic of Stamitz' music is most significant. That frequent and sudden changes between loud and soft in a style of composition, that the development of the crescendo and the diminuendo in the playing of an orchestra, could raise wonder and praise all over Europe and in England, proves very definitely that the average composer of this period was indifferent to one of the chief means of emotional expression. Burney,* after visiting Mannheim and hearing the orchestra under the leadership of Stamitz, wrote, " Since the discovery which the genius of Stamitz first made, every effect has been tried which such an aggregate of sound can produce ; it was here that the Crescendo and Diminuendo had birth ; and the Piano, which was before chiefly used as an echo, with which it was generally synonymous, as well as the Forte, were found to be musical colours which had their shades, as much as red or blue in painting."

German influence grew stronger in France through the performance of Haydn's and Mozart's symphonies. Although the clear-cut plan of the Haydn symphonies appealed to the still, in regard to music, marked classic point of view of the critics, Haydn's style was often characterized as " dur." French taste objected

* Burney : *The Present State of Music in Germany*, 1775.

still to any signs of scholarly musicianship in a composition. Mozart's symphonies were criticised because they had too many ideas. Considered more elegant than the symphonies of Haydn, they were also declared more severe and of such complexity that they " had to be heard frequently in order to be understood." Beethoven's early symphonies followed, and, like those of Haydn before him, were pronounced " dures " and " compliquées." After one performance of the *Pastoral Symphony* it was declared " que ce n'était pas là de la musique."* The first performances of the symphonies of Haydn, Mozart and the younger Beethoven, however, gradually accustomed French taste to music which, because of its intellectual and emotional value, could stand alone, without the assistance of words.

The first performances, such as they were, of Mozart's operas in Paris are of interest also as showing the influence which German music was further extending in the operatic field and the attitude of the critics towards music of real worth. It was in 1793 that the *Marriage of Figaro* was first performed in Paris. In 1801 the *Magic Flute* was given at the *Opéra* in a much garbled version under the title of *Les*

* A. Dandelot, *La Société des concerts du Conservatoire.*

Mystères d'Isis, and in 1805 *Don Juan* was performed. In the years following, they were repeated at the various theatres, and gradually the public became used to what they called 'the symphonic style' of these operas.

Of *Don Juan*, the *Journal de Paris* wrote, "Mozart n'a point un caractère particulier de composition ; il unit à la mélodie enchantresse des Italiens toute la fougue d'harmonie qui distingue l'école allemande ; c'est le Protée de la musique."

The only discerning criticism was that of the celebrated Geoffroy in the *Journal des Débats*. Geoffroy, like most of the critics of the day, knew little about music, but his comments have the value of frankness and sincerity. Of *Don Juan* he wrote, "Mozart n'a rien composé pour la France, et l'on s'aperçoit toujours qu'il n'a travaillé que pour les Allemands. . . . Son véritable défaut consiste dans cette extrême profusion que produit la satiété. Mozart a jeté sans choix et sans mesure des beautés qu'il fallait placer à propos. . . . Il y a trop de musique dans *Don Juan :* les morceaux d'ensemble sont tellement multipliés, ils sont si pleins et si fort que les auditeurs se trouvent, pour ainsi dire, écrasés sous le poids de l'harmonie. Les Allemands ont un plus grand appétit et un

estomac plus robuste que les Français ; ils sont insatiables de musique et d'harmonie. . . . Les morceaux pathétiques, les grands traits d'harmonie ont été en général peu sentis. Est-ce un tort du public, ou bien faut-il s'en prendre au compositeur lui-même, si la partie de cette musique qui doit être la plus admirable a été la moins admirée ? "

The ideals of the music critics of the First Empire were clearly in strong contrast to the ideals of the German composers. Clearness was still the measure of musical criticism. The critics, with little or no technical knowledge or appreciation, could see no necessity for music doing more than accompanying the words and providing " contrastes et oppositions." This principle of music as a careful scheme of logical contrasts of ideas and phrasing was clearly demonstrated in Haydn's symphonies. Haydn undoubtedly was more akin to the classic spirit than Mozart, and it was for this reason, rather than from any true understanding of its content, that his music was accepted more readily by the French. Haydn's inventive genius, however, which is shown in the clever development of rhythmic motives to obtain effects of climax and in original uses of harmony and counterpoint, distinguished all his instrumental compositions

from the vapid productions of the French composers of instrumental music. The French found his craftmanship " severe," while they delighted in the naive and joyous character of his melodies, in the child-like rather than in the mature side of his genius. How differently a German critic, E. T. A. Hoffmann, writing in 1810, conceived of the qualities of Haydn's, Mozart's, and Beethoven's music! * " The instrumental compositions of all three masters," he wrote, " breathe the same romantic spirit, which lies in a similar deep understanding of the essential property of the art." In comparing the three, Hoffmann says, " Haydn conceives romantically that which is distinctly human in the life of man; he is, in so far, more comprehensive to the majority.

" Mozart grasps more the superhuman, the miraculous, which dwells in the imagination.

" Beethoven's music stirs the mists of fear, of horror, of terror, of grief, and awakens that endless longing which is the very essence of romanticism."

It was this imaginative quality in instrumental music which the symphonies and string quartets of Haydn and Mozart were little by little bringing into France. The " il y a trop de musique dans

* E. T. A. Hoffmann: *Kreisleriana.*

Don Juan " of Geoffroy was the ever recurring protest against the growth of the *symphonie instrumentale* in the opera. And this *symphonie instrumentale* was not marked merely by the introduction of new instruments in the orchestra and the more individual and independent use of the instruments already there, such as characterized the *symphonie instrumentale* of Rameau's operas at the beginning of the eighteenth century. That which made the use of the orchestra by Haydn and Mozart, either when employed as a perfectly self-sufficing medium of musical expression or as a background for the operatic ensemble, different from the French conception of instrumental music, was the introduction of the poetic element, independent of any association of ideas. The introduction of the element of fantasy and poetic imagination into the stereotyped forms opened the way for the later romantic lyricism of Chopin and Schumann, in which individuality of emotional expression was the ideal of musical creative writing. But more directly, it was preparing in France as it had prepared in Germany, for the advent of Beethoven.

" Beethoven's music stirs the mists of fear, of horror, of terror, of grief, and awakens that endless longing which is the very essence of

romanticism," wrote Hoffman in 1810. All this, and more, too, twenty years later was found by *Jeune-France* in Beethoven's symphonies under the baton of Habeneck at the *Conservatoire* concerts, and in the later quartets performed by Baillot, while the general public still considered these later works as the utterances of a disordered mind. Berlioz, listening to the *C sharp minor Quartet* expressed his feelings and those of the small group of rabid romanticists in these words : * " Peu à peu je sentis un poids affreux oppresser ma poitrine comme un horrible cauchemar, je sentis mes cheveux se hérisser, mes dents se serrer avec force, tous mes muscles se contracter et enfin, à l'apparition d'une phrase du finale, rendue avec la dernière violence par l'archet énergique de Baillot, des larmes froides, des larmes de l'angoisse et de la terreur, se firent péniblement jour à travers mes paupières et vinrent mettre le comble à cette cruelle émotion." This spectacle of *Jeune-France* giving itself over completely to the powerful fantasy of Beethoven's genius is in strong contrast to the picture of the critics of the Empire, repelled by the severity of Haydn and Mozart. The different attitudes

* Berlioz : *Biographie de Beethoven*, from *Le Correspondant*, 1829.

of the two parties, the extremists of the romantic *cénacle* on the one hand, and the pseudo-classic critics on the other, were rather the result of their totally different general conceptions of art, than of an opposite understanding of the qualities of the music in question. Geoffroy recognized the intellectuality of Mozart and his musicianship, but he did not want these things in music. He protested against the invasion of German music, because, to him, it was " froide, triste, lugubre, d'une facture pénible, baroque et difficile, plutôt qu'originale."* But he said openly that it was their fear of his greater musicianship that was the cause of much of the antagonism to Mozart among French and Italian composers in Paris.

Just as the Parisian public had accustomed itself, at last, to the music of Mozart, through the repeated performances of his operas, so, later, the symphonies of Beethoven came to occupy an accepted place in the concert repertoire. In the 1830's under the influence of the romanticists, Beethoven became a cult in artistic and fashionable society. Under Habeneck the Beethoven symphonies were so frequently performed that it seemed almost as if the *Concerts du Conservatoire* had been

* *Les Débats*, Oct. 15, 1811.

specially founded in 1828 for that purpose. The first important performances of the symphonies in Paris had been in 1824 by the orchestra at the *opéra*. The *C major Symphony* had, it is true, been performed at the *Concerts Français* by an amateur orchestra as early as 1807. But it was not until after 1824 that the Beethoven symphonies began to take a really important place in the evolution of the romantic movement. One can imagine the impression the revolutionary character of Beethoven's works made on French musicians of that time by recalling the remark of Boieldieu to Berlioz which the latter quotes in his *Mémoires :* " Je ne comprends pas la moitié de Beethoven, et vous voulez aller plus loin que Beethoven ! "

The enthusiasm of *Jeune-France* for the music of Beethoven was only natural. He represented in so many ways the principles for which they were fighting. He has been called the Mirabeau, the Danton, of music. In his life he showed his absolute independence from the rules and conventions of society. He was an ardent republican and angrily erased the dedication of the *Eroica Symphony* when he learned that Napoleon had become emperor. Even in his early works, when he was imitating the prin-

ciples of sonata form established by his predecessors, the original power of his genius was shown in his daring use of bold harmonic effects. The slow movements of his early sonatas testify to the essentially emotional basis, even then, of his creative inspiration. As he outgrew the period of his musical apprenticeship, instead, any longer, of adapting his ideas to the stereotyped formulas of the classical sonata, he molded the form to suit the requirements of his own dramatic eloquence. He made of music a speech through which he could express all the emotional reactions of his ardent spirit. The free expression of his emotions was an absolute and prime necessity to him, whether these emotions were those of love, of religion, of patriotism, or of a simple joy in nature. His music reflected his feelings in its rhythmic vitality, in the poignancy of its broad melodies, and in its sudden and sharp contrasts. No wonder that the young romantic revolutionists of 1830 lost their heads in listening to the music of this great original genius.

It must not be forgotten, however, that Beethoven in rebelling against traditions, did not, like many of the later romanticists, ignore them. Neither did he seek originality for its own sake. He was in sympathy with the vital

principle of the romantic movement, the principle of subjective emotional expression, and he did more than any other composer to make music personal as well as universal. But, like Goethe in literature, he showed that only in the combination of emotional expressiveness and intellectual restraint can art rise to its highest and most permanent forms.

Beethoven's works were the foundation of the romantic movement in German music. In French romanticism theirs must be considered as one of the strongest external influences. Though Beethoven's music emphasized the poetic basis essential to music without a program, Berlioz, because to him the quality of its emotional expression was too abstract, tried to find a program in it. Liszt, too, later pointed to the overtures *Egmont* and *Coriolanus* as the models for program music. In taking this point of view both Berlioz and Liszt were merely expressing, in their own romantic way, their recognition of the subjective quality of Beethoven's music. Berlioz and Liszt were the two great exponents of Beethoven in France—Liszt, indeed, performed the *E flat Concerto* for the first time in Paris as early as 1828.

The influence of Beethoven was tardily followed by that of Schubert. It was in the 1830's

that Adolphe Nourrit familiarized the Parisian public with Schubert's songs. Later, Liszt did much towards extending Schubert's influence by performing his piano compositions and transcribing the songs. Such songs as the *Erlkönig* chimed in with the romanticists' love of wild fantasy and stimulated the desire for dramatic expression. His essentially romantic instrumental compositions, such as the suggestive and imaginative *D minor Quartet* and the *Symphonies*, were not performed in Paris until much later. Taken as a whole, Schubert's influence came too late to noticeably effect the current of musical romanticism in France.

The influence of German musical ideas on the French romantic movement, exerted already so powerfully through Beethoven's symphonies, was brought to bear on a larger public and in an even more striking manner by the operas of Weber.

It was in December, 1824, that Castil-Blaze staged the *Freischütz* under the title of *Robin des Bois*. The first performance was a failure. The Parisian public did not respond to the gloomy and weird scenes and the suggestive mystery of the music. The very scenes which had appealed most to the German romanticists

brought up on the pantheistic nature-worship of Novalis, Wackenroder, and Tieck, seemed ridiculous to the French. Not that the supernatural was unheard of on the French stage, but the French demanded, even in the use of the miraculous, a certain amount of logical action. There was no objection to fairies, witches, and other spirits *per se* provided they seemed to have some connection with the actions of real life. The jumble of fantastical symbols and the wild orgy in the scene of the casting of the bullets in the Wolf's Glen failed to throw its spell over the audience at the first performance of *Der Freischütz* in Paris, and what was intended to be horrible and fearful appeared only ludicrous. Castil-Blaze hurriedly withdrew the opera after the disastrous *première*, and before the opera was again performed both text and music had been rearranged to suit the taste of its public. Music by other composers was inserted, and Agatha, a true German maiden, serious, thoughtful, and melancholy, took on the character of a soubrette! Not only that, but, for several succeeding performances, the house was purposely filled with the staunch supporters of the management, all those openly hostile to this Teutonic invasion of French opera, being carefully excluded. The

public, accustoming itself to the strangeness of the German romantic background, became more and more fascinated by the music which, even from the first, had repelled much less than the text. The music, was, of course, criticised for lack of clearness. Agatha's prayer in the second act was too long, and a more conventional and energetic conclusion was desired in place of the "interminable" finale. But the critics could not help but recognize what after all were the main characteristics of *Der Freischütz*, true expression of the German national spirit, an interpretation of the mystery of nature, and the use of the suggestive qualities of orchestral timbre. *Le Globe* tried to point out that Weber's music was, however, not an expression of the German nation but only of the romantic school, and that it had little of the genuine Teutonic character of the music of Haydn and Beethoven. The fact is that Haydn represents much less the German national spirit than the general spirit of the eighteenth century. To a certain extent this is also true of Mozart, with his mixed German and Italian tendencies. But Beethoven and Weber did bring into France the genuine German spirit; Beethoven, the more philosophical, and yet subjective, attitude towards

nature, thought, and emotion, and Weber, the more picturesque fantasy of suggestive poetic imagery. Weber's music relied frequently on picturesque suggestiveness rather than personal expression. Many of his most dramatic effects, instead of being clear and definite, were vague and mysterious. In emphasizing the poetic instead of the lyric basis of opera, Weber directly challenged the contemporary French and Italian operatic schools. He also set up a much higher standard of musicianship in operatic composition.

The influence of Beethoven and Weber followed close on the heels of the literary romantic movement in France. Chateaubriand, in a language full of images, of vivid color, was telling of scenes and actions in distant lands, stimulating the imaginations of youthful France, and stirring in their breasts the endless longing and melancholy egotism which was shortly to become the so-called *mal du siècle*. Mme. de Staël turned the attention of her contemporaries to the imaginative poetry of the north, to the legends of the middle ages and the Nibelungen, which were then stimulating the poets and philosophers of Germany. France began to look back at her own history through the eyes of Guizot in his *Essai sur l'histoire de France*

and of Thierry in *les Temps Mérovingiens*. All the art and literature of Europe was called on to renew the thought and inspiration of the times. Between 1810 and 1830, Scott, Byron, Goethe and Dante were translated into French, and the literary and philosophical essays of Schlegel, Schiller, and Herder were used to spread the romantic conception of art, literature and life.*

Interpreting romanticism as the effort to break away from empty formulas and to put more of life and individual emotion into art and literature, we think of Beethoven breaking the way with giant strides, introducing into music frank individualism and extending the boundaries of the art in every direction. Romanticism, considered as the seeking for suggestiveness instead of definiteness, sensuous warmth and color instead of decorative patterns, orchestral characterization and the portrayal of the mysterious, is exemplified in the works of Weber and Schubert. Beethoven broke down forever the theory that music was a dependent and decorative art, and established it once for all as an art with an emotional language of its own. "Les symphonies de Beethoven,"

* See short list of translations in Lanson's *Histoire de la littérature française*, p. 934.

declared *les Débats*, " presentent la réunion de toutes les puissances musicales . . . . "* The Beethoven symphonies and the romantic operas of Weber testify to the development of eighteenth century German musical ideals into a new and more vital life in the nineteenth century. The introduction of these works into France played an important part in combating the devitalizing influence of Italian opera on French music and in stimulating the spread of the new romantic spirit in music.

* *Les Débats*, Dec. 23, 1824.

IV

THE ROMANTIC OPERA

The two greatest French composers before Berlioz, Rameau and Méhul, had proved their strength in their ability to oppose the powerful current of Italian lyricism with the equally powerful French trait of dramatic expressiveness. The public, however—and not only the general public but also the aristocracy of society and of letters—had a strong tendency to be satisfied with the sensuous and spectacular delights of the Italian pieces. Had it not been for the decisive assistance of Gluck, the influence of Rameau, before him, and of Méhul, after him, would hardly have been strong enough to create a national school of French opera.

As it was, neither the French nor the Italian school of operatic composition could claim a permanent victory, and a third school came into existence in which a result of combined French and Italian influences can be seen. Spontini, for instance, was the chief writer of Italian opera in Paris before Rossini, but he was so strongly affected by the reforms of Gluck that his work, in spite of its decidedly Italian

atmosphere, must be considered as perpetuating, in part, the Gluck tradition. Henri Montan-Berton and several other composers of the French school, popular at the beginning of the century, but now almost totally forgotten, employed, it is true, the facile method of Italian operatic composition. Again, there was Mozart, exemplifying the combination of Italian songfulness and grace with the symphonic quality of German music. Mozart, indeed, was adopted by the Italian school; his operas, with those of Paisiello and Cimarosa, provided the chief material for the repertoire of the *Opéra Italien* which was established in Paris at the beginning of the century.

Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto* and *I Nemici Generosi*, both produced at the *Théâtre des Italiens* in 1801, represent the more sparkling and brilliant side of Italian opera. The French public was fascinated by their melodic profusion, their original theatrical affects, and rapid action. Napoleon preferred them to French opera undoubtedly because, as Cherubini remarked, they did not prevent him from thinking of affairs of state. Their lightness of orchestration, however, had a good effect on French composers, who, following the examples of Cherubini and Lesueur, showed a

tendency towards a rather pedantic style of instrumentation.

The popularity of the operas at the *Théâtre des Italiens* did not fail to arouse the advocates of French opera. Méhul led the opposition by protesting vigorously against the encroachment of Italian superficiality.

For a while it looked as though the doctrines of Gluck aided by the new influence of German instrumental music, would prevail over the spirit of dilettantism. During this period the promoters of Italian opera were afraid, in spite of the vast and fashionable crowds which witnessed the performances at the *Théâtre des Italiens*, that the appeal of vocalism would soon lose its force, in face of the growing vogue for instrumental music. Stendahl, in a letter from Italy on *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, published about 1817, wrote: "I still retain, my dear Louis, the opinion I held six years ago when I wrote to you about the great German symphonist. The cultivation of the instrumental department has ruined music. It is much more common and much more easy, to play well on the violin, or the pianoforte, than it is to sing; and hence arises the facility with which instrumental music corrupts the taste of the lovers of vocal; as

the last fifty years have abundantly shewn." His criticism is a testimonial to the hold which pure music was securing in Paris. But Stendahl had little to fear. A few years later the performances in Paris of Rossini's early operas were increasing the popularity which Italian opera had already regained since the days of the Gluck-Piccinni quarrel. In the twenty years following it seemed to the discouraged opponents of the Italian school as if all their efforts to raise the standards of French dramatic music had been in vain. Much later Joseph d'Ortigue * in taking up the cudgels for Berlioz' *Benvenuto Cellini* complained that the popularity of Italian opera had grown in spite of Gluck and that the preferences of the crowd had been little affected by any influence of German concert music.

The two men chiefly responsible for the continued success of Italian music in Paris, were Rossini and Meyerbeer.

In 1816 *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* was performed at the Salle Louvois. It had had its first

* Joseph d'Ortigue: *L'École Musicale italienne et de l'administration de l'académie royale de musique á l'occasion de l'opéra de M. H. Berlioz :* Paris, 1839. Dedicated to Léon Kreutzer. The second edition in 1840 has on an added title page, *du théâtre italien et de son influence sur le goût musical français.*

performance in Rome three years earlier. In 1823, after the failure of *Semiramide* in Venice, Rossini went to London where he had an immense artistic and financial success. In 1824 he was appointed director of the Paris *Opéra* and invited to produce his old works and to compose new ones. He rearranged both *Maometto II.* and *Mosè in Egitto*, and gave them at the *Opéra* in 1826 under the names of *Le Siège de Corinthe* and *Moïse*. To these he added *Le Comte d'Ory* in 1828 and finally *Guillaume Tell* in 1829.

The production of *Guillaume Tell*, which overshadowed all the rest of Rossini's work, marked, with Auber's *La Muette de Portici*, which had been performed a year earlier, the opening of the epoch of romantic opera in France. The dramatic power and musical characterization of *Tell* distinguished it from other contemporary Italian operas. It was not entirely accidentally that Rossini changed his hitherto conventional style and appeared suddenly as a champion of romanticism. From the beginning of his career he had had plans of reforming the Italian opera. He had studied closely the scores of Haydn and Mozart and had gained a mastery of musical composition which was much above the usual equipment of

Italian operatic composers. Coquard * remarks concerning the *Barber of Seville* : " S'il y avait innovation par rapport à ce que produisait alors l'école italienne, il faut avouer que l'art de Gluck, de Mozart, et de Beethoven laissait bien loin derrière lui les 'audaces' du *Barbier*. Et pourtant, comment douter qu'il n'y montrât une réelle audace, quand on voit le public parisien si complètement dérouté, et celui de Rome, plus démonstratif, aller jusqu'à siffler l'ouvrage à son apparition ? "

Rossini's change of style in *Tell* has been attributed to the demands of the French public ; but French historians of music have, as a rule, been apt to overestimate the influence of French taste on the foreign composers who have won success in Paris. The Italian, Lully, from spending almost his whole life in France, became, indeed, a naturalised Frenchman. Gluck, whose style was well formed before he came to Paris, is credited with receiving much more than he actually did from his contact with French style and taste. In Spontini's case there seems to be more justification for the historian's judgment of him as a convert to French operatic ideas. Coquard in describing the unmistakable progress in operatic

* Coquard : *De la Musique en France depuis Rameau.*

style accomplished by Rossini and Meyerbeer, says " Pour la définir, en un mot, nous dirons qu'elle a consisté, pour l'un comme pour l'autre, dans la recherche de l'expression, cette conception *essentiellement française de l'art.*" Lavoix * points out with natural pride how Berlioz and David later applied their natural French dramatic instinct to developing the instrumental forms introduced into France from Germany.

The demands of the French public were undoubtedly responsible for much of the dramatic quality in *Guillaume Tell.* It was a clear response to the formulated demands of the romanticists. *Jeune-France* insisted that the theatre should be an imitation of real life instead of classical models and that it should be free from conventional restrictions of form and choice of subject. The story of *Tell* with its spirit of independent republicanism was bound to appeal to the younger school. The scene of the conspiracy and the taking of the oath at the Rütli, the pastoral picturesqueness of the Swiss landscape, and the sensationalism of the storm stimulated the romantic imagination from many different points of view. In the music itself there was more definite

* Lavoix, fils : *La Musique française.*

characterization than there had ever been in Italian music and new interest in obtaining appropriate orchestral effects. Local color was emphasized as it had been by every composer from Gluck to Spontini who aimed to attain dramatic characterization rather than vocal lyricism.

In historical perspective the superficiality of Rossini's style, as a whole, crowds out the romantic qualities of his best work. Rossini aimed at popular success and in all his music we feel this prostitution of his genius. The painter Ingres called his music, " the music of a dishonest (malhonnête) man." Rossini compromised with the dilettantism of the public. He pretended to use vocal display for dramatic purposes ; he knew that his real reason was to increase his own success by featuring the vocal abilities of the singers in order to pamper the superficial taste of the fashionable public. The examples of original harmony and of orchestral color, of characteristic melody and dignified declamation in his scores, only emphasize the more cruelly the pages and pages of trivial commonplace.

Thus the romantic movement in France did not find a whole-hearted exponent in Rossini and yet *Tell* would never have been written without

the romantic impulse of which Rossini was clearly conscious. As long as Italian vocalism remained, opera could not be a complete expression of romantic art because romantic art called for the realistic expression of life, and nothing could be more contrary to the spirit of realism than machine-made arias with lengthy vocalisations and ritornellos. The only excuse for Rossini, if it can be called an excuse, is that it was his nature to take the path of least resistance, and that his compromising with dilettantism was not with the conscious calculation of Meyerbeer.

The same romantic tendencies which had shown themselves in *Guillaume Tell* were entering into the more serious works of the younger French composers. Among these, Auber, Hérold, and Halévy were the most prominent. Although the greater part of their work was, it is true, in the lighter forms of *opéra-comique* established by Boieldieu, yet they each contributed something to the development of more serious opera, though often using for their purpose the technical form of *opéra-comique*, with its spoken dialogue.

Auber's *La Muette de Portici* had preceded *Tell* by more than a year. It would hardly have had such a tremendous success as a romantic

opera if the text had not given it a special significance in its reference to the revolutionary political conditions. Its subject was the revolution of Naples in the year 1647, and the rise and fall of Masaniello, the fisherman king. *La Muette* is important in the history of romanticism especially on account of its historical character. In the choice and treatment of the story it shook itself free from the conventional classical, biblical, or fanciful background. It was a realistic drama in five acts with an intensely tragic ending. It was full of what, at that time, were extravagant scenic, choral, and instrumental effects, supported by rapid melodramatic action. With its use of much vivid local color, it was like setting on the stage a bright picture of Italian popular life. Of course the introduction of a dumb character was criticised for depriving the opera of the dramatic soprano part, but Auber used the unusual situation to obtain some very original and striking pantomimic and theatrical effects. Just as Rossini's romantic tendencies were not strong enough to make him abandon his peculiarly Italian predilection for sensuous melody and superficial vocalism, so the revolutionary sympathies of Auber were not powerful enough to make him sacrifice his inherent

Parisian desire for a scintillating and polished style. He took his cue from Boieldieu rather than from Méhul. The predominant characteristic of Auber's music was *esprit*, the typical trait of French *opéra-comique* which distinguishes it from *opéra*.

In comparing Hérold with Auber, Chouquet * says that while Auber "ne connaissait pas d'ombrages plus frais que ceux du bois de Boulogne," Hérold, "aimait la vraie campagne et la vie en plein air." Indeed, in this respect, Hérold has more of the real romantic temperament than any of the others. Berlioz called him "le Weber des Batignolles."† He was more poetic than Rossini and Meyerbeer; he was less brilliant than Auber but he was more truly musical. In his youth he composed sonatas, quartets, and symphonies: he then threw himself impetuously into dramatic composition. His outlook, musically and otherwise, was not limited by the walls of Paris—he travelled in Italy and England; he had seen Vesuvius in eruption. He was a man of keen sensibilities and he endeavoured to put what he saw and felt into his music. He had a natural instinct for dramatic situations—the influence of Méhul is very apparent—

* Chouquet: *Histoire de la musique dramatique en France.*
† "Batignolles" refers to a quarter of Paris.

which, combined with the power of genuine emotional expression, produced operas which can be called truly romantic. The best were *Zampa*, produced in 1831, and *Le Pré aux Clercs*, in the year following. Like Weber, he experimented with the use of the different tonal qualities of the instruments to get new effects in orchestration. In *Zampa* he abandons the gay, light manner of Boieldieu for a style more expressive of tenderness, melancholy, and passion. Inspired by Byron and Mérimée, his two greatest operas express both romantic melancholy and dramatic realism. Dying at the age of forty-two he cried out: "Je pars trop tôt, je commençais à comprendre le théâtre!" Did he feel that he had only partially expressed in the superficial operatic forms of the day the poetic longings of his artistic soul? To-day we hear the overture to *Zampa* performed by a brass band and wonder at the mixture of theatrical climax and light melody. It is hard to realize now that there was anything original or poetically elevating in the style of Hérold, but a study of his life shows he was striving for much higher ideals of artistic expression than his Italian and French contemporaries.

Halévy was still more of a dramatist but

less of a musician than Hérold. His two most famous operas, *La Juive*, in the serious, and *l'Eclair*, in the light genre show a strong resemblance with Meyerbeer's style. The list of his operas shows his vitality and his versatility. He was the only French composer who was equally successful in *opéra* and *opéra-comique*. He had a lively imagination and an easy command of all the theatrical resources of opera. Writing too quickly to leave works of permanent value, he filled his stage with a great variety of picturesque scenes and striking personalties. Merely reading the titles of his operas gives some idea of the luxuriance of his romantic imagination—*Guido et Ginevra*, *la Reine de Chypre*, *Charles VI.*, *le Juif errant*. Such operas were calculated to win immediate success, like those of Rossini and Meyerbeer. Their faults lay, not in the excessive vocalism of the Italian style, but in the sacrifice of a well-constructed background to obtain separate more effective dramatic situations. Halévy had a natural theatrical genius, but he handled his subject mechanically, with almost no thoughtful, artistic purpose.

Auber, Hérold and Halévy, with Adolphe Adam, the composer of *Le Postillon de Lonjumeau*, fairly represent the French operatic

composers at the height of the romantic movement. Hérold came nearest to an expression of the romantic temperament; he possessed the necessary poetic feeling, and understood the musical and dramatic means which must be employed to create a romantic opera. Adam, whose work has not been considered, appears to have escaped entirely the romantic influence. But a consideration of the works of these men as a whole shows that French opera never more than partially followed the trend of romanticism.

The composer who exerted the greatest influence on the development of the romantic opera was Meyerbeer. He completely swayed the taste of the French public during the middle of the century. If Rossini can be charged with dishonesty in compromising with the dilettantism of the public, Meyerbeer can easily be convicted of a much more self-conscious and commercial pandering to the the public taste. *Robert le Diable*, performed in 1831, *Les Huguenots*, in 1836 and *Le Prophète*, in 1849, mark the chief events of Meyerbeer's activity in Paris. His operatic career dates from the performance of *Romilda e Constanza* in Padua in 1818, and by the time he came to Paris he had gained complete mastery of

Italian operatic technique. He grasped at once the more obvious external features of French romanticism and he deliberately set himself to duplicate in opera the romantic revolt of the French theatre. What he seized upon were really the features of decadent romanticism rather than the genuinely romantic trait of freedom from pseudo-classicism and the principle of a vital and individual expression of life in art. Meyerbeer recognized that nowhere so well as in the opera could the eccentricities and extravagances of romanticism be presented to the public with so much insinuating glamor. Romanticism said, "You may portray what you like upon the stage; there are no dramatic proprieties; you may mix the genres; what we want is life in any and all of its phases, and action and color and imagination and passion stripped of its conventional restraints." So Meyerbeer indulged in the most extreme contrasts, mixing plain-chant and ballet tunes, religion and gaiety, noisiness with effects of pastoral simplicity. He massed large choruses on the stage to produce spectacular theatrical and musical effects Everything was for effect and to obtain popular success. Schumann pointed out the banality of his repeated use of *Ein feste Burg* in the

Huguenots to secure the impressiveness that his subject needed. There are pages and pages of mere filling-in with the simplest, machine-made harmonies and arpeggioed figures absolutely devoid of musical meaning.

Methods of other composers which could be of any value to Meyerbeer, he imitated freely with apparently no fear of losing his own individuality. He adopted musical and dramatic ideas from Rossini, Mozart, Hérold, Weber, Bellini, and even Berlioz. It is known that Meyerbeer interested himself in Berlioz, and it is quite possible that the sensational scoring of *Robert* was suggested by Berlioz' novel ideas of orchestration. The score of the *Huguenots* shows not only this same influence but also an imitation of the *idée fixe* of the *Fantastic Symphony*. And Berlioz was twelve years younger than Meyerbeer! Not that Meyerbeer lacked originality, for there are strokes of genius in his orchestration. There are several scenes in the *Huguenots* which have been cited over and over again for their dramatic originality and effectiveness. His use of dignified, solemn unisons, or slow and unusual chord successions to give an effect of impressive mystery, seems calculated, however, rather than spontaneous.

That Meyerbeer knew how to give at least the appearance of originality to his work is shown by the criticisms in such journals as the *Constitutionnel*, *le Moniteur*, and the *Gazette de France*. "Enfin! voici du nouveau," wrote the critic of the *Constitutionnel*. ". . . ce n'est plus du Gluck abâtardi, du Mozard (sic) efféminé, ce n'est pas même du Rossini." He handled his theatrical effects with so much skill and kept up such a variety of picturesque scene and action, that the critics did not have time to stop and analyze his large indebtedness to various operatic predecessors and contemporaries.

He was also universally praised by the critics for his power of dramatization. No composer, they asserted, had ever portrayed so vividly situations of horror and terror. Never had the idea of Hell been expressed so convincingly as in *Robert*. The last act was declared sublime and the whole world held up its hands and cried: "C'est prodigieux!" It seemed that there was no degree of emotion from the tender to the brutal, from the spiritual to the devilish, from the simple to the majestic, which Meyerbeer was unable to express. As a matter of fact *Robert le Diable* owed its success to Scribe's libretto as much as to Meyerbeer's music.

Liszt, in his article *Scribe's und Meyerbeer's "Robert der Teufel,"* written in 1854, points out the unusual co-operation of librettist and composer which existed in Meyerbeer's operas. Scribe, as Liszt shows, sympathized with the literary unrestraint of the age and, in depicting the devil as a tender father, displayed the same desire for eccentricity that Hugo had shown in combining in one character the qualities of a courtesan, a tender mother and a murderess. As to the devil in *Robert*, Liszt adds, "Heute (1854) würde es schwer halten einen solchen sentimentalen Teufel dem Publikum vorstellen zu dürfen. Damals aber, als *Robert* erschein, brachte ihm gerade diese Extravaganz sein Glück."

In 1831 romantic extravagance was at its height. The influence of Byron and Hoffmann stimulated a tremendous demand for the fantastic, the weird, the exciting and the supernatural. No moral law was to be held higher than the law of a man's own individuality. Fashionable society raved over the degenerate hero in Eugène Sue's *Salamanda*, and took pleasure in the atrocities against nature which Dumas took the pains to portray in *Antony*. To pile up sensational climaxes, emphasis was laid on unreal situations

and exaggerated contrasts; hate and love, sweetness and villainy, terror-stricken grief and overpowering joy, were placed in glaring juxtaposition. All these violent extremes of romanticism were expressed in the operas of Meyerbeer and Scribe.

Liszt asserts that Meyerbeer's works established a new epoch in operatic writing by emphasizing situation rather than the old popular vocalism. The truth is that Meyerbeer had great facility in turning to account whatever he found of use, theatrically or musically, in the work of other men. From the Italians he took, to please the taste of his dilettante public, sensuous, melancholy emotion and the vocalism of the Rossinian aria. From Beethoven and Weber he learned greater variety of orchestral effects, the secret of instrumental color and more definite rhythmic characterization; from Berlioz, he acquired new ideas of the descriptive capabilities of the orchestra. He added of his own, a clever use of folk-songs and popular airs, full of old association to the public mind. Laurencie says, " Son mérite consiste essentiellement à avoir justement senti et apprécié ce que la masse du public retenait de l'essor romantique : confusion des genres, disparate des styles, culture mosaïste,

goût de l'exotisme et du pittoresque, prédisposition aux impressions visuelles, et par conséquent à l'extériorité, au geste, à la danse."*

No composer, however skilled, could have combined successfully so many of the romantic ideas, however obvious or external they might be, without a certain real genius. There are scenes in Meyerbeer's operas which have all the attributes of dramatic greatness, both in the handling of situation and characters and in the suggestive power and strength of the musical background. But, as in the case of Rossini, Meyerbeer's demonstrations of genius only serve to make his artistic commercialism the more conspicuous.

Though Meyerbeer was the most typical exponent of romanticism in French opera, an infinitely more true and more highly developed expression of romantic ideas in operatic music was soon to come in the great music-dramas of Richard Wagner.

Bellini and Donizetti did little more than continue the frank Italianism of Rossini. Measured beside Meyerbeer they have little importance in the romantic movement. The elegiac sentimentality of Bellini's melodies had, however, a decided influence on the melodic

* Laurencie : *Le goût musical en France*, p. 283.

style of Chopin. The music fitted in well with *le mal du siècle* but the musical forms which he, as well as Donizetti, used were hollow and conventional.

In looking back over the rise of the romantic opera in Paris from Auber's *Muette de Portici* in 1828 to Meyerbeer's *Prophète* in 1849, a constant development of romantic musical and theatrical effects is noticeable. Of the three French composers, Auber, Hérold, and Halévy, Hérold expressed most genuinely the spirit of French romanticism. Rossini, though influenced somewhat by the progressive musical ideas and romantic tendencies of the times, belonged more particularly to the conventional Italian operatic school. For the most part his music was ornately brilliant, vivacious, even passionate, but essentially popular and without seriousness or depth. Yet, by striving to express in his one great masterpiece the combined tendencies of the Italian, French, and German schools, Rossini out-did himself and became, for the moment, a romanticist. Meyerbeer was a thorough-going romantic, but he was, even more than Rossini, a " malhonnête homme " in his methods of composition. He saw the demand for romantic opera and he filled it. The commercialized

spirit of his works does not, however, prevent them from being the most complete and typical examples of the romantic spirit in French opera.

Note.—The following short list of important musical events in Paris between 1824 and 1832 shows clearly how the romantic movement was declaring itself in music.

1824. Weber, *Freischütz*. Beethoven, *Symphonies*.

1825. Weber-Castil-Blaze, *Euryanthe*, or *La Forêt de Sénart*.

1827. Fétis founds *Revue musicale*.

1828. Auber, *Muette de Portici*.

1829. Rossini, *Tell*.

1830. Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*; Liszt, *Revolutionary Symphony*.

1831. Meyerbeer, *Robert le Diable*; Hérold, *Zampa*. Paganini and Chopin in Paris.

1832. Donizetti and Bellini in Paris.

V

BERLIOZ

Berlioz is the one great composer who perfectly represents the romantic movement, not only in France, but in all Europe. The sincerity and inherent originality of Berlioz' romanticism are in strong contrast to the absolute insincerity and superficiality of Meyerbeer. If ever an artist reflected the conditions of the epoch in which he lived, that man was Berlioz, in whose character and music are mirrored all the complex features of the romantic revolution. The paintings of Delacroix or Gericault were no more startling in the originality of their subjects than the early works of Berlioz. Victor Hugo was no more revolutionary in his conception of the drama than Berlioz was in his use of instrumental music for descriptive and autobiographical purposes. De Musset or Vigny never displayed a more sensitive and suffering soul, depressed by the *mal d'isolement* but responding and quivering to every impression of life and love and nature. Berlioz stands out, not only among all other musicians in Paris, but among the whole group of artistic, literary,

social, and political romanticists, as the most perfect exemplification of the romantic spirit.

Before Berlioz, we have seen how the tendencies of romanticism first strongly appeared in the works of Méhul and Spontini, who derived their inspiration from Gluck. The introduction of German music into France assisted the romanticists in their struggle against the banalities of Italian opera ; in conjunction with other romantic forces, the influence of the operas of Weber and the symphonies of Beethoven compelled even the Italians to pay more attention to the musical and dramatic ensemble. Opera was still the only form of musical composition which appealed to the general public. Rossini compromised with romantic taste without giving up the clap-trap methods by which he maintained his hold on the public. Meyerbeer, combining, to attain his object, both German and Italian methods of operatic composition, won his success by pandering to the romantic taste for sensationalism and calculating every effect by his knowledge of the romantic appetite for unusual dramatic situations. Auber, Hérold, and Halévy managed to keep a certain amount of national individuality in their operas, but in the hands of the Rossini of *Tell*, the eclectic Meyerbeer, and of such public entertainers as

Donizetti and Bellini, romantic opera was almost completely Italian. Because Meyerbeer's operas were based on the continuation and combination of the various operatic methods, particularly Italian, adapted to romantic principles of art, it seemed advisable to consider his contribution to the romantic movement before discussing Berlioz' absolutely original application of romantic ideas to music. It has already been pointed out that the beginning of Berlioz' activity antedates Meyerbeer's appearance in Paris, and that Meyerbeer undoubtedly adopted some of Berlioz' ideas in *Robert le Diable*, and the *Huguenots*. The *Fantastic Symphony* was performed in 1830, the year before *Robert* appeared, and the *Harold in Italy* symphony two years before the *Huguenots*, in 1834. While the dominating influence of Meyerbeer continued with *Le Prophète* and *L'Africaine* well into the middle of the century, practically all of Berlioz' greatest work was accomplished before 1840. The fact remains, however, that Meyerbeer's operas are largely explained as a sequel to the romantic trend of Rossini's *Tell*, while Berlioz' works have much less connection with the past and are very closely allied with the radically progressive spirit of the literary and social romantic epoch.

Berlioz illustrates so completely, in his personality and in his works, the spirit of romanticism that it is essential, for an understanding of what the romantic movement meant in music, to study not only his music, but also his life and literary writings.

Before Berlioz went to Paris in 1821, at the age of eighteen, there had been little in these early years of his life, spent in the quiet surroundings of the village of La Côte Saint-André, to awaken in his mind the modern ideas of the outside world of literature and philosophy. But Berlioz was born a romanticist, and even in that little quiet corner of France, and in the midst of the domestic respectability which surrounded his early education, he managed to develop an outlook on nature and life and literature which was, to an extraordinary degree, anticipatory of his later conscious romanticism. Even the spiritless pastoral fiction of Florian's *Estelle et Némorin*, which he found in his father's library, set his boyish imagination on fire, and he pictured himself as the Nemorin for a real Estelle, the Estelle Fournier who was his childhood's sweetheart, whose image he cherished in his heart to the end of his life and to whom he returned, as an old and wasted man, as other romanticists returned to the visionary

idols of their imaginations. He reacted in a similar poetically sensitive manner to any experiences of an emotional nature. He tells in his *Autobiography* of his translating the death scene of Dido in the Aeneid: "the agony of the dying queen, the cries of her sister, her nurse, her women; the horror of that scene struck pity even to the hearts of the Immortals, all rose so vividly before me that my lips trembled, my words came more and more indistinctly and at the line—

'Quaesivit coelo lucem ingemuitque reperta'

I stopped dead.

"Then my dear father's delicate tact stepped in. Apparently noticing nothing, he said, gently: 'That will do for to-day, my boy; I am tired.' And I tore away to give vent to my Virgilian misery unmolested."

Berlioz' early education, reading Horace and Virgil with his father, was, indeed, much more suited to his sensitive, impressionable character than any regular schooling would have been. His father had imbibed something of the Rousseauan theory of education through emotion and the imagination, rather than through prescribed methods and discipline. There was always a certain fellow-feeling between the father and his impetuous son, which was in

strong contrast to the lack of sympathy between Berlioz and his mother, who had little patience with his artistic nature.

As Berlioz grew older he came under the influence of Chateaubriand's René—the René whose supersensitiveness and melancholy set him apart from the crude reality of life. In the youthful Berlioz one can clearly see symptoms of the *mal du siècle* in that excess of temperament which is characteristic of the romantic nature wherever it is found.

In 1821 Berlioz went to Paris to study medicine. He showed himself at once an unconscious romanticist, in his passionate reactions to his first impressions of the social and artistic life of the city. He was stirred by everything that was new to him, and became an enthusiast even for the academic preciosities of Andrieux, whose lectures on literature he attended as part of his prescribed course. At the opera he was dazzled by the brilliant spectacle and the wonders of orchestral tone and color. He was thrilled and amazed equally by the superficial *Nina* and *Azemia* of Dalayrac and by the operas of Gluck. But Berlioz was soon able to distinguish between mere dilettantism and progressive art. At the opera he came in contact with other youthful enthusiasts

who put him in touch with the romantic ideas in literature and art. Some were pupils of Guérin and of Gros, who were striving in painting for more vital ideas of beauty than were expressed in the statuesque figures of David's pseudo-classic canvasses. At the *Salon*, Gericault, Sigalon, and Scheffer were succeeding in making themselves talked about and Delacroix's *Dante et Virgile* had aroused the critics. Chateaubriand was the idol of the younger generation. According to Vigny he had consented to become the prime minister as God had been made man! Hugo, the leader of the *cénacle* of 1824, was crying out for liberty—liberty of thought and liberty of form. "La poésie vit beaucoup moins de fiction que de vérité."* Truth was demanded above everything else. Gradually the leading romantic spirits banded together and met at the theatre or at the house of Nodier, adding every day to their number disciples of the new art. The seeds of romantic individualism, scattered by Rousseau and cultivated by Chateaubriand, were bearing fruit in the plays of Hugo, the paintings of Delacroix, and the poetry of de Musset, in which individualism was carried to an excess of morbid self-revelation. Lasserre,

* Hugo: *Muse française*, May, 1824.

who is an extreme anti-romantic critic, describes this period as the vortex of decadent romanticism into whose turgid current were drawn such writers as Hugo, Sand, and Dumas who were not naturally romantic. He says, " L'originalité du romantisme de 1830 consiste dans ce furieux travail, dans cet enfantement frénétique d'idées fausses."*

It was inevitable that Berlioz should catch the fever. His excited imagination inflamed by the glowing lines of the romantic poets led him into excesses of romantic enthusiasm unequalled by any of his companions. He felt the uniqueness of his genius. At last he understood Chateaubriand's *Atala* and *René* and experienced *le vague des passions*. He, too, wanted to express in art the vital experiences of his soul.

The study of medicine was given up for that of music. He studied with Lesueur and then at the *Conservatoire*, both with Lesueur and Reicha. He wrote a mass, and got into debt having it performed. His allowance was cut off, and he lived in a garret and endured serious privations to pay off his debt. He failed three times to secure the *Prix de Rome*. Then the performance of the *Fantastic Symphony*, in 1830, brought him before the public as a figure

* P. Lasserre: *Le romantisme français.*

in the romantic movement who could no longer be disregarded. To this period belong all his most frenzied enthusiasms,—for Gluck, Weber, Beethoven, Shakspere, and for the English actress, Harriet Smithson, who created Ophelia in Paris. His mind was a seething volcano of emotional reactions. He exercised no restraint mentally or physically. Disillusioned as to the character of Harriet Smithson, he tried to dull the desperation of his feelings by walking in the country until he became unconscious from physical exhaustion. To tell the story of these hectic years in Berlioz' life is to describe the psychology of the extreme romantic temperament.

Finally he did win the *Prix de Rome*, but hardly had he reached Italy when he received the news that Camille Moke, to whom he had become engaged, had married someone else. His first impulse was to rush back to Paris, disguise himself as a lady's maid, find his unfaithful fiancée, murder her, and then commit suicide. He started back on the road to Paris, bought pistols and his disguise, lost his disguise and bought another, and then, at Genoa, overcome by the beauty of nature and dismayed at the thought of giving up his life at the beginning of a promising career, he suddenly

changed his wild purpose and leisurely returned to Rome, enjoying, he writes, the happiest days of his life, lying on the warm slopes of the Italian hills and bathing in the ocean. Such was his nature; as full of violent contrasts and changes as his art. He shocked Mendelssohn with his irreligious talk, and he delighted the people of the street by wandering around Rome with his guitar and picking up their popular songs.

Back in Paris, in 1832, his passion for Harriet Smithson was reawakened, and, after much unhappiness—on one occasion he tried to poison himself, before her very eyes, and all but succeeded—they were finally married. The first two years of their marriage were the happiest years in Berlioz' life. Then came financial difficulties and Berlioz, who had unusual literary gifts, was obliged to do endless hack-work for the magazines. As was inevitable under the irritation of these difficulties, Berlioz' domestic happiness came to an end. For some time his wife had been incapacitated for appearing on the stage, and when she did appear, she was unable to repeat her former successes. Sickness began to interfere seriously with Berlioz' work, and for the rest of his life he suffered the results from lack of physical care of himself in his earlier years. By 1840 all his

great works had been composed, and from then to the end of his life, Berlioz' genius seemed to lose more and more of its vitality. He felt the neglect of the public, particularly in Paris; for on his various travels in Germany, Russia, and England he was received with much more enthusiasm than he had ever aroused in the general public at home.

The last twenty years of Berlioz' life, in a world which had outgrown the interest of the romantic revolution, were depressing to the ardent leader of romanticism. Wagner came to receive the laurels that might have been his. One by one Berlioz' friends died and he was neglected by a generation which had no musical ideals and did not appreciate his greatness. When his son Louis died, he was left quite alone, except for Estelle Fournier, the passionate love of his first youth. Like many another romanticist cherishing his nympholeptic dreams, he had all his life kept her image in his heart. He went to see her at Geneva; nor was his dream destroyed by the sight of her—a gentle, grey-haired old lady.

Such was the nature of Hector Berlioz, the man. The romantic character of his musical genius owed as little to his early education as did his personal traits to the surroundings of

his youth. His imagination was stirred by his first impression of music in the same emotional way that his sensitive mind had been excited by the beauties of the *Aeneid*. The twelve year old boy, kneeling at his first communion, was thrown into mystic raptures by the beauty of the catholic service, the smooth, distant tones of the priest's voice, and the singing of a chant arranged from a romance in Dalayrac's *Nina*. His reactions were musical more than spiritual, and we cannot help thinking of Chateaubriand whose religious fervor had been born in his æsthetic delight, at the sight of the uplifted host in the first rays of the rising sun.

There is no other great musician whose technical training was so meagre as was that of Berlioz. Only one piano was owned in his *département*, and what slight musical instruction Berlioz received as a boy, came from the master of the small amateur village orchestra who taught him to play the guitar. The remarkable element of tonal color in his music may owe its origin, in part, to the fact that Berlioz never learned to conceive music through the comparatively colorless medium of the piano. Like his later master, Lesueur, he always disliked the instrument. From the beginning, however,

he wanted to write music. To solve the difficulties of harmony he had recourse to the theoretical writings of Rameau, d'Alembert, and Catel, but he soon threw them aside as useless and depended on his own empirical method of composition. A few pages of Gluck's *Orphée* came into his hands, but before going to Paris he had heard no music better than Pleyel's quartets and the romances of Boieldieu, Berton, and Martini. Yet there can be no doubt that Berlioz carried with him to Paris some vague idea of the subjective expressional qualities of music. His natural gift of musical ideas but lack of instruction can be compared to Rousseau's meagre equipment for musical composition. It is related that in order to test Rousseau's youthful assertion of his musical powers, he was provided with an orchestra, and that he actually wrote out the parts for a composition which was entirely beyond his abilities to carry out: brazenly standing before the orchestra, he tried to face out the disastrous performance of the unintelligible score which he had written. Berlioz was a Rousseau born a century later, with the same general instinctive ideas of the emotional possibilities of music, with little more technical training, but, in contrast to Rousseau, he was inspired by true musical

genius. His early attempts at composition in Paris, the cantata, *Le Cheval Arabe*, and *Le passage de la Mer Rouge*, show a remarkable conception of the general treatment of the subject matter in spite of an extraordinary crudeness of technique.

As has already been noted, Berlioz' mind reacted at first indiscriminately to the music which he heard at the *Opéra*, but his natural instinct for the dramatic rather than the merely sensuous in music, soon made him a radical partisan of the operas of Salieri, Gluck, and Spontini, and an equally strong opponent of the dilettantism of Rossini. For Gluck there was no limit to his enthusiasm. At the time when he should have been studying medicine, he spent his days reading the scores of Gluck's operas in the library of the *Conservatoire*, until he knew them by heart. These were the years of the performances of the Beethoven symphonies at the *Conservatoire* concerts and of Weber's *Freischütz* at the *Opéra*. The tragic intensity of the *Fifth Symphony* came upon him like a thunderclap. And though, like the rest of the Parisian public, he was at first repelled by the confused romantic text of the *Freischütz*, he was carried away by the poetic suggestiveness of the music and the subtle

coloring of Weber's orchestration. There were no words strong enough to express his admiration for the works of those masters.

Lesueur was the providential teacher for the young Berlioz. Lesueur's ideas of the function of music have been pointed out in a previous chapter. He was still an independent when Berlioz went to him in 1824, and almost the only one of the teachers at the *Conservatoire* who was not entirely bound, as were Cherubini and Reicha, by academic traditions. There were many points of sympathy between master and pupil, and Lesueur had strong faith in Berlioz' genius. In describing the resemblance between Lesueur and Berlioz, Octave Fouque wrote :* " le système exclusif de musique à programme, la recherche passionnée de l'expression, le sentiment du rythme, l'harmonie consonnante et bizarre, la mélodie caractéristique, le souci de la peinture des objets extérieurs, la faculté de découvrir la relation entre certains sentiments et certaines tonalités, l'image éveillée par le timbre, les effets de sonorité primant tout, en un mot la *couleur* musicale pour laquelle Berlioz avait des dons si étonnants qu'on peut dire qu'il a créé une nouvelle langue à l'usage de l'orchestre, tels

* Octave Fouque : *Les revolutionnaires de la musique*, 1883.

sont les principaux traits de cette ressemblance." It should be remembered, however, that this similarity was really between Lesueur's theories and Berlioz' actual creative accomplishment.

The performance of Berlioz' early mass at the church of Saint-Roch in 1825, brought his music to the notice of the public for the first time. The style was as extravagant and unrestrained as one would expect from an ardent, youthful romanticist. Berlioz wished to astound his audience with the boldness of his dramatic scheme. At the *Iterum venturus* all the trumpets and trombones announced in unison the coming of the Supreme Judge with such a startling effect that Berlioz, himself, who was playing the drums lost his head and gave such a blow to the *tam-tam* that " all the church trembled." Lesueur sitting off in a corner of the church where he could see the audience, reported that the result was inconceivably dramatic, and, fine old independent that he was, said to his disciple : " Vous ne serez ni médecin, ni apothecaire, mais un grand compositeur ; vous avez du génie ; je vous le dis, parce que c'est vrai."

Between the performance of his mass in 1825 and the production of the *Fantastic Symphony* in 1830, Berlioz was busy with arious com-

positions, *La Révolution Grecque*, *Lénor ou les Francs-Juges* and *Les Huit Scènes de Faust*, besides several shorter pieces all of which show his propensity for a highly individualised, descriptive orchestral style and his scorn of the sentimental voluptuosity of Italian methods. His contemporaries did not understand him, and when he tried in 1827, 1828, and 1829 for the *Prix de Rome*, he was doomed to failure as long as he refused to compromise with the conventional ideals of his judges. After one of these vain efforts to secure the prize, Berlioz reports that Boieldieu who was one of the judges, said to him, " Mon cher ami, vous aviez le prix dans la main, vous l'avez jeté a terre. J'étais venu avec la ferme conviction que vous l'auriez ; mais quand j'ai entendu votre ouvrage ! . . . Comment voulez-vous que je donne un prix à une chose dont je n'ai pas d'idée. Je ne comprends pas la moitié de Beethoven, et vous voulez aller plus loin que Beethoven ! Comment voulez-vous que je comprenne ? Vous vous jouez des difficultés de l'harmonie en prodiguant les modulations ; et moi qui n'ai pas fait d'études harmoniques, qui n'ai aucune expérience de cette partie de l'art ! C'est peut-être ma faute ! je n'aime que la musique qui me berce." As a matter of fact, Boieldieu's

knowledge of harmony was limited not for lack of study but because the standards of *opéra-comique* required no more knowledge of harmony than was necessary to fill in the accompaniment. Undoubtedly the novelty of Berlioz' harmonic treatment, which contemporary composers considered radical and unintelligible, was due partly to the fact that he did often use unusual chord successions, and partly that, as a follower of Beethoven, he made use of every harmonic resource within his knowledge, to obtain greater tonal and expressive power. When he at last succeeded in winning the *Prix de Rome* in 1830, it was only by restraining his natural method and remembering that his judges liked the music " qui berce."

But the performance of the *Fantastic Symphony* in 1830 and its repetition in 1832 are of far greater importance than his winning of the *Prix de Rome*, for Berlioz got very little in a musical way out of his trip to Italy. Though he had leisure to compose, undisturbed by any financial worries, he was always longing to be back in the midst of the artistic controversies in Paris, to be assisting at the first performance of *Robert le Diable* or some *première* at the theatre. He wandered around the hills thinking of Byron's *Harold*, and put the experience of

his recent love affair into the music of *Lélio ou le Retour à la vie*. His musical development was almost unaffected by his Italian experiences, for he consistently hated the music of the opera houses (where people talked instead of listening), and he found pleasure only in the naive sentimentality of the popular street songs of the country. But he was deeply influenced by the charm of Italian plastic art and inspired by the marvellous beauties of nature. Romain Rolland has pointed out that no other composer has ever understood the Southern nature, and the Southern love of beautiful form and harmonious movement, as well as Berlioz.

The first performance of the *Fantastic Symphony* was not complete and its full significance did not appear until December, 1832, when it was played in the *Salle des Menus* of the *Conservatoire*, with *Lélio ou le Retour à la vie*, before a distinguished audience which included both the leaders of the romantic group and the leading representatives of the conservatives, such as Fetis. Even Harriet Smithson, whom all Paris knew as the unfortunate object of Berlioz' passion and the unenviable heroine of the very music to be performed, occupied a box where all eyes could admire her majestic though languid beauty.

It was distinctly a partisan occasion, for all *Jeune-France* came prepared to exalt this music which flung itself in the face of the academicians and the dilettantes. When Bocage, the actor, recited the lines in the melologue of *Lélio* which were aimed at " les tristes habitans du temple de la routine," he had the audacity to imitate the speech and gestures of Fétis so obviously that all eyes were at once turned towards the critic of *le Temps* and the *Revue musicale*. So Bocage declaimed : " Malédiction sur eux ! Ils font à l'art un ridicule outrage ! Tel ces vulgaires oiseaux qui peuplent nos jardins publics . . . quand ils ont sali le front de Jupiter ou le sein de Venus, ils se pavanent fiers et satisfaits, comme s'ils venaient de pondre un oeuf d'or ! " And this unrestrained invective against those who dare to alter the masterpieces, was received by the audience with bravos and laughter ! Berlioz wrote to his sister an exaggerated though picturesque account of the result of the concert. " Succès extraordinaire—écrasé d'applaudissements : bonne soeur, tu aurais été prise d'une attaque de nerfs ! . . . Bocage d'un sublime irrésistible. . . . Paganini, Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, Adolphe Nourrit, sont montés au théâtre pour me voir . . . je reçois des coups de chapeau

dans les rues, au théâtre, de gens que je n'ai jamais vus."

In the journals favorable to Berlioz, the *Corsaire*, of which he was an editor, and *la Quotidienne*, to which his friend, d'Ortigue contributed, there were the most extravagant notices. " Succès d'enthousiasme : rien de plus original, de plus dramatique, de plus entraînant. . . . Son audace a plu ; le public s'est passionné: les hommes ont applaudi, les dames ont pleuré . . ." But Fétis, whose really fine musicianship had been so openly flouted at the concert, did not keep silent. " Aucun artiste," he wrote in Le Temps, " si heureusement organisé fût-il, ne s'est dit, au commencement de sa carrière, qu'il allait faire une révolution dans son art. . . Avant d'être inventeur en musique, il faut être musicien : M. Berlioz ne paraît pas l'avoir compris. . . Il entrevoit des nouveautés qu'il est hors d'état de réaliser. . . Esprit inventif, ses conceptions avortent : son impuissance trahit ses désirs. . . . M. Berlioz n'est pas musicien. . . ." Fétis regrets that Berlioz did not have " une éducation musicale, faite dans l'enfance et bien dirigée. . . . La phrase de sa mélodie est gauche. . . son harmonie incorrecte, banale. . . Lorsqu'elle n'est pas trop monstrueuse, elle est commune. . . Parlerai-je

du rhythme ? Il offre quelquefois des irrégularités remarquables. . . Mais M. Berlioz n'innove pas. . . La nature l'a évidement pourvu d'un instinct des effets de l'instrumentation ; . . . il groupe les instrumens d'une manière pittoresque. . . ."

It was, for Berlioz, both good and bad fortune that his music should be judged in such a partisan spirit. For the time being, the group of romantic poets, artists, and critics had the upper hand, and the popularity of Berlioz' music benefited by the fashionable craze for everything that was bizarre and abnormal in literature, in art, or in life. The unfortunate result of this kind of criticism was that the vast majority of Berlioz' admirers praised only the external originality of his works and did not recognize, beneath the obvious romantic exterior, the music's deeper significance. Jules Janin, the famous journalist, who cared little and knew nothing about music, coined many of the phrases which the public quickly adopted as the correct characterisation of Berlioz' genius. " Assez parlé vaudeville," he writes. " Secouez votre manteau ; venez avec moi : nous allons voir un étrange jeune homme, fanatique, hardi, convaincu, un lauréat de l'Institut cependant.

. . . C'est un bizarre génie, homme excentrique, dédaigneux des formes reçues—se plaisant et s' exaltant de préférence à tout ce que est anormal dans l'art et dans la vie sociale. Il a vécu dans les montagnes d'Italie à la poursuite des brigands. . ." So the Berlioz legend grew, based on a certain amount of fact, to be sure, but injuring the prospects of Berlioz' permanent reputation. When the inevitable reaction to the violent excesses of the romanticists began to set in, who was left in Paris but a handful of faithful friends to support the later works of this once most radical of composers? Was not Berlioz' success in Germany, Russia, and England greater than in Paris chiefly because, in foreign countries his youthful works had not been the object of such vehement romantic propaganda and were judged in a spirit of less biased criticism? It was in the 1840's that romanticism began to decline under the influence of practical rationalism and its place was taken by the *bourgeois* "école du bon sens." To have achieved complete and lasting success in Paris, Berlioz should have been born twenty years earlier. As it was, his romanticism survived that of his contemporaries and he had the tragic experience as he grew older, of being not only neglected

but absolutely ignored by the Parisian public. The middle of the century in France was a period of musical decadence, and, in the opinion of Romain Rolland,* this was the case all over Europe—which also helps to explain the seeming failure of Berlioz in his last years.

In the early 30's, however, there had been a real reawakening in French musical life. "Jamais," asserted the *Gazette Musicale* in 1834, "depuis que les Français s'occupent d'art, on a observé chez eux un tel empressement à accueillir tout ce qui peut favoriser le développement de la musique. C'est une fureur, une rage; on n'entend parler de toutes parts que de nouveaux établissements qui s'élèvent, d'associations d'artistes qui se forment, de tentatives pour l'introduction de l'opéra allemand, de concerts périodiques et isolés, de nouveaux journaux de musique, de publications à bon marché."

The success of the *Revue musicale* founded by Fétis in 1827 put musical journalism on a firm footing; it was followed in 1830 by the *Gazette musicale de Paris* and still later by other musical publications. The *Gazette musicale*, besides enlisting the services of musicians like Berlioz, Lesueur, Liszt, and Halévy, published articles by George Sand, Balzac, Dumas, Jules

* Rolland: *Musiciens aujourd'hui.*

Janin, and Legouvé. It was unfortunate that these magazines, generally speaking, while they gave recognition to the romantic ideas in opera, were unable to accept the same romantic innovations when they appeared in instrumental music. With the exception of such writers as d'Ortigue and Liszt, French critics did not fully appreciate Beethoven's music nor understand its significance in the romantic movement. The whole situation suffered from the popularity of the Rossini-Meyerbeer operatic school, which was largely justified by the opportunity which it gave for the display of the really marvellous vocal abilities of singers like Malibran, Pasta, Grisi, Alboni, Rubini, and Lablache. Dilettantism exerted a steady force to make of music an entertainment rather than an art.

The general conception, of the public and of the critics, of pure music was based entirely on the principles of eighteenth century musical forms; even Berlioz, whose ideal was to dramatize all music, faithfully followed tradition in the form of the symphony. Take away the titles from the *Fantastic Symphony* and *Harold in Italy*, and the four conventional movements of the classical models remain. It is for this reason that historians like Coquard protest against calling Berlioz a revolutionist.

The introduction of the *idée fixe* was, however, a new element in the symphonic structure. During the whole of the nineteenth century, and even down to the present day, the fundamental principles of musical form have never felt the radical influences of romanticism as have the other elements of musical composition.

In the face of the declining taste of the public, Berlioz continued to compose and produced works which had all the dramatic power of his early compositions but which depended less and less on any external abnormalities. The *Requiem*, *Roméo et Juliette*, the *Carnaval Romain*, and the *Damnation de Faust*, completed in 1846, testify to the continued power of his musical genius. After the *Damnation de Faust* his creative inspiration began to leave him; the *Te Deum*, *l'Enfance du Christ*, *Les Troyens*, and *Béatrice et Bénédict*, show a gradual weakening of his musical and physical powers, the result of a life of abnormal artistic and mental excitement. No man's strength could withstand for many years the wearing strain of such continued, intense, passionate response to artistic stimuli, as he describes in the following passage:—"When I hear certain pieces of music, my vital forces at first seem to be doubled. I feel a delicious pleasure, in which

reason has no part; the habit of analysis comes afterwards to give birth to admiration; the emotion increasing in proportion to the energy or the grandeur of the ideas of the composer, soon produces a strange agitation in the circulation of the blood; tears, which generally indicate the end of the paroxysm, often indicate only a progressive state of it, leading to something still more intense. In this case I have spasmodic contractions of the muscles, a trembling in all my limbs, a complete torpor of the feet and the hands, a partial paralysis of the nerves of sight and hearing; I no longer see, I scarcely hear; vertigo . . . a semi-swoon." Here is the same intensity of personal experience, the same conscious sense of unique suffering and morbid self-analysis which was characteristic of Rousseau and which was expressed so perfectly by Chateaubriand in *René*. The egoism of Berlioz is so complete, so thorough, that most students of his character have become convinced of his sincerity. As a young English lady said of Chateaubriand, he " wore his heart in a sling," but the confession of his most intimate feelings to the outside world was such a continual necessity to him, that what may have been a pose at first, soon became an unconscious habit.

In the early part of his career the intensity of his feelings was equalled by his lack of restraint. He always acted on impulse. In his personal life there was no more respect of conventions and of social proprieties than, in his artistic life, there was thought of any limit to his musical conceptions. His ideas and actions were those of a superman. Like Victor Hugo he would have declared that he was not seeking originality but truth. And truth to him meant utmost expression of his own unique personality, in life, manners, actions and artistic production. His lack of restraint showed itself in the exaggerated musical means he employed to portray the unusual characters and situations which he chose as the subjects for his music. He attempted to make music describe events and scenes which, to his contemporaries, seemed quite outside the scope of musical expression. He used for his purposes musical means which had never been dreamt of by other composers. There was no limit to the size of his orchestra. His *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale* for two orchestras and chorus reminds us, in its tremendous effects, of the music written to celebrate the *fêtes* of the First Republic. Monster forces were needed to appropriately interpret the largeness of his ideas.

Berlioz learned enthusiastically from Spontini, Weber, and Beethoven; he drew inspiration from all music which spoke to him with dramatic power and individual emotion. He was influenced by everything in literature and art that was romantic in content—Shakspere, Chateaubriand, Byron, and Hugo. The multitude of images, reflections of his own emotional experiences and fiery enthusiasms, cried out for expression. He believed in the poetic basis of music, and he had a strong faith, inherited from Gluck and Lesueur, in its imitative qualities. Program-music was the natural outlet for his impressionable temperament. Program-music, in the case of Berlioz, was not so much a mixture of the arts as an attempt to make music express with greater definiteness the emotional reactions of the composer.

The romantic movement is held responsible for breaking down the boundaries of the arts and for the consequent confusion of *genres*. There is an essential difference, however, between poetry which is trying to attain the vagueness of music, and music which is attempting to achieve the narrative and descriptive power of poetry, for the first is seeking indefiniteness and the second definiteness of

expression. German romantic poets like Schlegel argued that words could be used for their sound, instead of their sense qualities and when manipulated on that basis could be arranged in such an order as to stimulate the imagination like music. Poetry, by discarding the restrictive meanings of words, would be better able to express the infinite. In this case it is clear that a fundamental quality of poetry, the meaning of words, is being subtracted and that the principles of one art are being confused with those of another. The romantic tendency here was to emphasize indefinite rather than definite suggestion. In program-music, the composer chooses to connect his music with a specified program, and, in the romantic manner, reveals his own individual feelings toward the subject. His work becomes more personal, that is, romantic, and less universal, that is, classic.

Practically every important tendency in the romantic movement is represented in Berlioz' music. The picturesqueness and sense of local and historical color, conspicuous in the writings of Chateaubriand and Walter Scott, are found in his *Waverley*, *Benvenuto Cellini*, and *Harold in Italy*. Such movements as the *Witches' Sabbath* have all the unrestraint of the satanic

school of Byron. The *Fantastic Symphony* reveals the wild melancholy which is so characteristic of most of the French romantic poets. The purely lyrical quality is less evident in Berlioz than in Liszt. Berlioz had an essentially dramatic genius and the lyric entered merely as a contributing element into his dramatic scheme. The measures from *Roméo et Juliette* (*see* Front.) show the intrinsic character of Berlioz' music, not its startling originality but its subtle quality of poetic suggestiveness, perhaps, in all, the truest sign of genuine romanticism.

The music is taken from the beginning of the love scene and is marked—" Starlight night. Capulet's garden, silent and deserted."

This music shows the most sensitive sympathy with the situation it portrays. There is the magic of moonlit darkness in the low tones of the strings ; there is the mystery of the scarcely visible background of the garden, the quivering of nature that penetrates the whole romantic picture. The long sustained tones of the clarinet and the English horn intensify the mood of passionate longing. There is no question here of the bizarre use of musical materials. The lyric beauty, the magic coloring in silver gray tones, the sympathy with nature,

make this music comparable only with music like the opening measures of *Oberon*, the second movement of the *Unfinished Symphony*, the introduction to Schumann's *Manfred* and other music of pure romantic fantasy.

Berlioz' activities as an essayist and critic, together with the serious and extensive literary efforts of such musicians as Liszt, helped to win for the nineteenth century composer a place in society as a thinker as well as an artist. Voltaire's words of surprise and admiration to Grétry, " You are a musician and you have brains ! " are typical of the opposite attitude towards composers in the eighteenth century.

Berlioz, indeed, was born with natural literary gifts. The expression of his ideas in words was as natural as their expression in music. He always protested that he had been forced to become a journalist, but the fact was that he had an instinctive and immediate desire to publish whatever theories and ideas were aroused in his active mind by the artistic events of the day. His mind was in no way limited by his musical outlook. Few of the romantic writers and painters appreciated music as Berlioz appreciated literature and painting. Nor does the merit of Berlioz' writings rest only on their critical appreciation

of art. He had a remarkable gift for fantastic story telling similar to that of E. T. A. Hoffmann. Hoffmann like Berlioz, was also a composer and used his fantastical literary creations as a medium for the expression of his musical theories. In *Les Soirées de l'orchestre*, in general style not unlike Hoffmann's *Kreisleriana* papers, Berlioz, using as his background an imaginary opera house orchestra, reports the conversation of its members which goes on not only during the pauses in the music but, with particular zest while the orchestra and the cast are going through the purely mechanical and perfunctory performance of a conventional Italian opera, before an audience which applauds high notes and trills with the usual vacuity of the bourgeois public. The persons in the conversation are designated as " Kleiner, ainé, timbalier " and " Kleiner, jeune, premier violoncelle," Carlo, the " garçon d'orchestre," " un monsieur, habitué des stalles du parquet," and the author. There is a distinct literary quality in the tales, which are often weird and fanciful,—like the one about the performance of the *Freischütz*, where the skeleton used for the incantation scene was the real skeleton of one who, with vehement signs of disapproval, had dared to disturb a previous performance of the opera.

Berlioz had the instinct for artistic lying which is essential to all good story telling. In his *Autobiography* he says, "One day when Crispino was lacking in respect, I made him a present of two shirts, a pair of trousers, and three good kicks behind." In a note he added, "This is a lie, and is the result of an artist's tendency to aim at effect. I never kicked Crispino." "But Berlioz took care afterwards to omit this note," remarks Romain Rolland in his essay on Berlioz His *Autobiography* may, however, contain more real self-revelation in its inaccuracies than in its accuracies.

Berlioz was pre-eminently a propagandist, both for his own works and for everything he admired in the music of others. He did not hesitate to furnish the public with advertising material, to call it by its proper name, based on the most sensational and intimate experiences of his life. His attacks on the arrangements of Weber's operas by Castil-Blaze were partly calculated to bring himself, as an ardent radical, before the public, and he did not hesitate to say that he knew the scores of Gluck better than those who performed them. But, with all his egoism, he fought persistently on the side of the minority, courageously attacking the shams of Italian opera and dillettantism, and working

tirelessly for the greater appreciation of the real masterpieces of music. His essays on Gluck's operas and Beethoven's symphonies show a critical insight far ahead of his time. Berlioz stood for sincere criticism, the seeking for beauty irrespective of traditional conventions. His writings convince one of the fundamental sincerity of the man. They show, as clearly as do his musical works, that he was not an imitator but an initiator, as original a romantic personality as Delacroix or Victor Hugo.

Berlioz had no real disciples. The middle of the century in France produced no vital music. David, who has been called a follower of Berlioz, was more nearly related to composers like Méhul and Hérold. The orientalism of *Le Désert* is, after all, only a striking use of local color in a special case. Grillparzer said, "Berlioz is a genius without talent, David a talent without genius."

Berlioz stands alone among French composers of his period. There was not one among his compatriots in music with whom he could sympathize. He was forced to seek his friends among the literary and artistic coteries where the romantic spirit was really understood. Refusing to be grouped with other musicians, he stands beside Hugo and Delacroix as one of the great leaders in French romanticism.

VI

LISZT AND CHOPIN

As Berlioz presented in his compositions and in his personality the most complete expression of romanticism, in the originality of mood, method, and subject in his music, and in his excessively romantic temperament, so Liszt, more than any other musician, understood all the kindred ramifications of romanticism in the philosophical and sociological, as well as artistic and literary, thought of his day. He was not, however, so completely carried away with it, as was Berlioz. The English critic Chorley,* in discussing contemporary French music in the early 40's, wrote,—" While the vague and picturesque praises of Janin and Sand, and the united theory and practice of M. Berlioz, have conspired to lead them (composers) away from the old forms of composition and to engage their heated fancies upon elegies, hymns, serenades, convent-prayers, witch scenes, fishermen's songs, and such picturesquely-christened

* Chorley: *Music and Manners in France and Germany—a series of travelling sketches of art and society*, Vol. III. 1844.

caprices, where the name (*sub rosa* be it said) is often times the most characteristic feature of the work, . . . Liszt has been a good influence in these troublous times." "But," the English critic later add, "Liszt has not been conversant with the Byron worshippers and the Hoffmann students, with the Pantheistic religionists and the new society-mongers of the French metropolis—without a vein of natural singularity being encouraged and cherished."

If any reason need be given for considering Liszt as one of the protagonists of French musical romanticism, it may be remembered that he first appeared in Paris as an infant prodigy in 1823, and that after his father died in 1827, the sixteen-year old youth settled down to make his home in Paris and to win in a few years the reputation of a mature musician. From 1827 to 1834 he became more and more a prominent figure in the social and artistic life of Paris and a recognized member of the romantic group. After his alliance with the Comtesse d'Agoult in 1835, he lived in Switzerland and Italy, and it was during these wanderings, between 1835 and 1840, that he contributed the series of articles to the *Revue et Gazette musicale* and composed the first volume of the Années de Pélérinage, which are such a remark-

able expression of the romantic spirit. From 1839 to 1847 he acquired his unequalled reputation as a virtuoso in every large city of Europe. After 1848 he became permanently allied with the neo-German school of musical composition, and became, during his residence in Weimar, its actual leader. At the same time he continued his propaganda for the romantic school in France. With the rest of his career this essay is not concerned.

When Liszt first came to Paris in 1823 he was only twelve years old and what education he had received had been chiefly musical and typically German under the guidance of Carl Czerny. His father took him to Paris because, at that time, it was the most important place in Europe for an artist to make his *début*. In 1825 Liszt's youthful opera, *Don Sancho*, was performed at the *Opéra*, more as the astonishing product of a boy of fourteen than for its intrinsic artistic value, and in the following year his *Douze Etudes* were published in Marseilles.

The youthful Liszt's mind was like a sensitive film which not only could register but also could retain a limitless number of external impressions. Endowed with an extraordinary pianistic genius, while yet a child he mastered

the literature of the piano. He memorized without effort and read scores with amazing facility. It has been said of him that, though other musicians of his time may have had a more scientific knowledge of music, not one of them knew so much music. When he first began to take an interest in literature, about 1828, he showed the same boundless mental receptivity. He surrounded himself with the works of Chateaubriand, Montaigne, Lamennais, Voltaire, Lamartine, St. Beuve, Ballanche and Rousseau. His appetite once aroused was insatiable. The anecdote of his rushing up to the Avocat Crémieux in Paris, and exclaiming, " Monsieur Crémieux, apprenez-moi toute la littérature française ! " is absolutely typical of his state of mind. No wonder that the avocat remarked, " Une grande confusion semble régner dans la tête de ce ieune homme." More and more he came under the influence of French romanticism, not only in literature but also in religion and politics. His friendship with the abbé Lamennais points to the direction of his religious enthusiasm and the sketch of a *Symphonie revolutionnaire*, hastily improvised in 1830, testifies to his republican sympathies. In 1832 he wrote to a friend—" Here is a whole

fortnight that my mind and fingers have been working like two lost spirits—Homer, the Bible, Plato, Locke, Byron, Hugo, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Beethoven, Bach, Hummel, Mozart, Weber, are all around me. I study them, meditate on them, devour them with fury; besides this I practice four to five hours of exercises (3rds, 6ths, 8ths, tremolos, repetition of notes, cadenzas, etc., etc.). Ah! provided I don't go mad, you will find an artist in me! Yes, an artist such as you desire, such as is required nowadays!

"'And I too am a painter!' cried Michael Angelo the first time he beheld a *chef d'oeuvre* . . . Though insignificant and poor, your friend cannot leave off repeating these words of a great man ever since Paganini's last performance. René, what a man, what a violin, what an artist! Heavens! what sufferings, what misery, what tortures in those four strings!"

But a few days later he continued his letter—"My good friend, it was in a paroxysm of madness that I wrote you the above lines; a strain of work, wakefulness, and those violent desires (for which you know me) had set my poor head aflame; I went from right to left (like a freezing sentinel in winter) singing,

declaiming, gesticulating, crying out; in a word, I was delirious. To-day the spiritual and the animal (to use the witty language of M. de Maistre) are a little more evenly balanced; for the volcano of the heart is not extinguished but is working silently."

This letter reminds one of the romantic outpourings of Berlioz. Liszt's soul was, like Berlioz', sensitive as an Aeolian harp swept by the gusts of passion. The personal sympathy of the younger for the older of these two romanticists is shown by the transcription of the *Fantastic Symphony* which Liszt made in 1833.

Among the other influences which came into his life at this time was that of Saint-Simon. For a while he was a disciple of the socialistic religious ideas of the Saint-Simonians though he later denied that he had ever actually become a member of the sect. Lamennais' *Defence of Catholicism* aroused his intense religious feelings against the tyrannies of the Church. He also was attracted by the teachings of Ballanche, the socialistic philosopher of Lyons. From 1834 dates his intimacy with George Sand, whose writings stirred up so many social and moral questions in his mind.

Such was Liszt's response to the widely

varied romantic and revolutionary influences of his youth. The first important expression of the result of these influences on his mind was, significantly, in journalistic work rather than in musical composition. In 1835 he commenced writing for the *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* a series of articles on various social and interpretative aspects of music and the other arts. In *De la situation des artistes* he upheld the dignity of music and the musical profession, and demanded a place for music in the cultured life of society. The conception of art as a means of mental cultivation and religious expression was Saint-Simonian, but Liszt was influenced in these ideas even more profoundly by Lamennais than by Père Enfantin. Lamennais pleaded for a collaboration between art and religion. He criticized the theory of art for art's sake, and assigned to art the supreme object of perfecting the moral salvation of mankind. His ideas appealed to the mystical religious fervor of Liszt, particularly at a time when Liszt was feeling so keenly the humiliation of being judged merely as a public performer. " Will my life be forever tainted with this idle uselessness which weighs upon me ? " he wrote in a letter to Lamennais. " Will the hour of devotion and manly action

never come? Am I condemned without respite to this trade of a merry Andrew and to amuse in drawing-rooms?" For Liszt, Lamennais was the high-priest of his art and of his faith; for Lamennais, Liszt was a young hero in whom his ideal of an artist was incarnate.* In a foot-note to *De la situation des artistes* Liszt wrote concerning the cause of music: "La *cause*, M. de Vigny l'a dit dans sa belle préface de *Chatterton*, 'c'est le martyre perpétuel et le perpétuelle immolation de l'artist. La cause? . . c'est le droit qu'il aurait de vivre. La cause? . . . c'est le pain qu'on ne lui donne pas.' La cause, enfin? . . . C'est la dignité morale, la rehabilitation spirituelle, la consécration sociale et religieuse de l'art et des artistes, dont la mission est *d'exprimer, de manifester, d'élever et de diviniser* en quelque sort le SENTIMENT HUMANITAIRE sous tous ses aspects. Aussi un prédicateur-poète (Lamennais) a pu dire légitimement ces paroles mémorables: 'La régénération de l'art, c'est une régénération sociale.'" He points to Ballanche, Lamartine, and particularly Victor Hugo as having understood and prophesied the social greatness of art, "cette noble couronne du génie plébéien."

* Chantavoine: *Liszt.*

Nor was the democratisation of art a mere abstract ideal for Liszt. The exponents of "community music" to-day could well follow the rules laid down by Liszt for educating the general public, through community orchestras and choruses, the raising of the standards of general musical education, and the publication of cheap editions of good music. In his *Letter to George Sand* Liszt argued for a recognition of the efforts of such men as the abbé Joseph Mainzer, who had started an open-air singing-school for the workmen of Paris after their work was over in the evening. Romain Rolland and others have pointed to the democratic spirit of Berlioz in such music as the *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale* with its colossal expression of the feeling of the masses. But Berlioz was essentially an aristocrat and hated the *bourgeoisie* as most romanticists did. Liszt's sympathy for the people was genuine and he was sincerely interested in their musical education.

It has been said that, in protesting against the social neglect of musicians as a whole, Liszt was simply advertising his own social and literary attainments. It has also been suggested that he was trying to gain a footing in the established and recognized literary

circles of the day in order to be at less of a social disadvantage in his relation with the Comtesse d'Agoult. His *Lettres d'un bachelier*, though well written, have not, of course, the charm of George Sand's *Lettres d'un voyageur* which they were supposed to imitate, but they display unusual originality of thought and real literary ability. Emile Deschamps wrote of him,

> " Liszt, Liszt qui changerait, sans changer de délire,
> Les notes pour les vers, le clavier pour la lyre."

He demonstrated in his writings the kind of philosophical criticism of art which he held can only come from one who is himself an artist, an entirely new conception, at least as applied to musical criticism. Although he mercilessly attacked the *ancien régime* of the *Conservatoire*, he was alive to the danger of swinging to the other extreme and of looking at life and art only through the eyes of Byron or Werther, as so many of the romanticists did. In his *Letter to Louis de Ronchaud*, he compares Chateaubriand's too obvious seeking for picturesque exoticism with Lamartine's more sincere poetic expression. In his *Letter to Heine*, he sees in the desire for self-revelation of the romantic temperament a distinct evil. To Heine's charge that he was confusing all

the arts by not holding to one, he replied that he had merely caught one of the diseases of the age. All through his letters he shows his unusual understanding of contemporary thought, and he establishes once for all the romantic conception of music, not as an isolated phenomenon, but as an integral part of the social structure. This thought often recurs in his later writings, as in his article "*Über Beethoven's Musik zu 'Egmont'*" when he contrasts the musician of former times, who was only a *Fachmann*, with the modern composer, who seeks inspiration in every form of literature, art, and life.

The first book of the *Années de Pélérinage*, which belongs to the same period—1835 to 1840—as his contributions to the *Gazette musicale*, transcribes into music many of the ideas which he expressed in his essays. In the preface to the *Années*, he asserted that instrumental music should be more than a simple combination of sounds, that it was a poetic language, often more suitable than poetry itself to express the impressions of a free-soaring imagination. Riemann,* who much prefers Liszt's romanticism to Berlioz' because, as he declares, Liszt never ignores the inherent

* Riemann, *Handbuck der Musikgeschichte*, II. 3. p. 235 ff.

qualities and attributes of absolute music, states that the view that romantic musicians sought to associate some poetic or picturesque image with music, while classical musicians were content with a meaningless decorative combination of sounds, is absolutely baseless. He goes back over the old story of the use of program music, from Kuhnau and earlier composers down to the *Pastoral Symphony*, with a superb disregard of the difference between the childlike attempts of eighteenth century composers at more or less mechanical imitation and the imaginative basis of romantic music like Berlioz' *Romeo and Juliet*, Liszt's *Faust Symphony*, or Schumann's *Carnival!*

Undoubtedly the emphasis on program music as an element in the romantic movement has been often exaggerated, but there can be no doubt as to the difference in the attitude of nineteenth and eighteenth century composers, in respect to the relation and connection of music with verbally suggested images and ideas. Riemann points out how Schumann, "the real romanticist," turned away from Berlioz because he came to the conclusion that Berlioz was trying to make music do impossible things. Liszt's music, like Schumann's, derived more nearly from the lyric romanticism of Schubert.

Liszt protested against the idea that music could be substituted for the other arts and pointed out in his article on *Robert Schumann's Klavierkompositionen* that one stroke of a painter's brush had more definite power in picturing a landscape than pages and pages of music. In the same article, however, he quotes Berlioz as an authority in the following words: "Niemand," sagt Berlioz, "denkt daran aus der Musik etwas so Lächerliches machen zu wollen als diejenigen, welche sie 'pittoresk' genannt haben. Aber das, was man denkt, was alle grossen Geister von jeder gedacht haben und immer denken werden, ist die Musik mehr und mehr mit Poesie zu durchdringen und sie zum Organe jenes Seelenthätigkeiten zu machen, die—wenn anders wir allen denen Glauben schenken wollen, welche mit aller Kraft geliebt, gelitten und empfunden haben—der Analyse unzugänglich sind und sich dem beschränkten und endlichen Ausdruck der menschlichen Sprachen entziehen."

At times, undoubtedly, Berlioz went further than Liszt in his efforts to make his music specific, but was it not because Berlioz had a dramatic and Liszt more a lyric turn of mind? In Germany the romantic movement in music

had expressed itself to a great extent in the lyric forms, and Liszt, as did Chopin, tended to follow German methods of musical composition. Like Berlioz, he felt that Beethoven had exhausted the capacity of the old larger forms and that new forms must be created. Berlioz dramatised the symphony into the *ode-symphonique* and the *drame-symphonique*, while Liszt, with his more lyrical tendency, created the *poème-symphonique*. Liszt, as much as Berlioz, instinctively felt the need of a program in music, and, in his *Letter to George Sand*, he regretted that Beethoven had not published a key to his more complicated instrumental works. He admired *Fidelio* and *Egmont* not only for their intrinsic beauty but because they had opened the way for the modern lyrical drama and the symphonic poem.

The preface to the first edition of the *Années de Pélérinage* is such a complete revelation of Liszt's youthful attitude towards the art of musical composition that it is worth quoting *in toto*. It runs as follows " Ayant parcouru en ces derniers temps bien des pays nouveaux, bien des sites divers, bien des lieux consacrés par l'histoire et la poésie ; ayant senti que les aspects variés de la nature et les scènes qui s'y rattachent ne passaient pas devant

mes yeux comme des vaines images, mais qu'elles remuaient dans mon âme des émotions profondes ; qu'il s'établissait entre elles et moi une relation vague mais immédiate, un rapport indéfini mais réel, une communication inexplicable mais certaine, j'ai essayé de rendre en musique quelques-unes de mes sensations les plus fortes, de mes plus vives perceptions. . . . A mesure que la musique instrumentale progresse, se développe, se dégage des premières entraves, elle tend à s'empreindre de plus en plus de cette idéalité qui a marqué la perfection des arts plastiques, à devenir non plus une simple combinaison de sons, mais un langage poétique plus apte peut-être que la poésie elle-même à exprimer tout ce qui en nous franchit les horizons accoutumés, tout ce qui échappe à l'analyse, tout ce qui s'attache à des profondeurs inaccessibles désirs impérissables, de pressentiments infinis. (*sic*).

" C'est dans cette conviction et dans cette tendance que j'ai entrepris l'oeuvre publiée aujourd'hui, m'adressant à quelques-uns plutôt qu'à la foule ; ambitionnant non le succès, mais le suffrage du petit nombre de ceux qui conçoivent pour l'art une destination autre que celle d'amuser les heures vaines, et

lui demandent autre chose que la futile distraction d'un amusement passager."

The purely musical ideas in the *Années de Pélérinage* are not as original as the poetical conception of this series of lyrical mood-pictures. The picture is painted and the mood established with sympathy but without musical genius. As in the prose of Chateaubriand, there is a luxuriance of romantic coloring, but in all the nine pieces, from the *Chapelle de Guillaume Tell* to *Les Cloches de Genève*, the music has the impressionistic quality and lack of depth of clever improvisation. The *Vallée d'Obermann* has much of the sad revery of Senancour, but the bombastic storm with which this piece ends is anything but typical of Senancour's sincere suffering. At their best, however, these lyric pieces approach in poetic suggestiveness the poems of Musset, Lamartine, and Vigny. Their improvisatory character is strikingly romantic; an improvisation is so personal, so far away from the classic view of art as a summing up of experience in an immortally perfect form. Lamartine described the quality of Liszt's romantic inspiration when he told how Liszt had played to him, seated in the window of his house overlooking the valley of Saint-Point, improvising symphonies "sur-

naturelles et irréfléchies." "La brise seule," wrote Lamartine, "aurait pu écrire ses improvisations vagabonds . . . Les jeunes garçons et les jeunes filles . . . croyaient que toute la vallée s'était transformée en un orgue d'église."*

Though taking his cue from the materialization of the romantic spirit in the other arts, Liszt applied the principles of romanticism in an original manner to music. The discarding of the conventional forms and the invention of new methods of composition in such works as the *B minor Sonata* testify to his progressive spirit. He did more than any other composer in finally establishing the poetic basis of program-music and, in doing so, developed the possibilities of theme transformation. He was distinctly a musician of the future. No one was ever more in sympathy with whatever tended to advance the evolution of music. He saw in the freedom of Beethoven's music the key to future progress, and he was encouraged by men like Lamennais to turn from the conception of art for art's sake to the theory of art as the interpretation of life. He tried to make it so in his music. Liszt had many

* Lamartine: Souvenirs et Portraits. III. 287, 2nd ed. Paris, 1880.

faults; the worst was a lack of fine musical inspiration; his other faults were those of romanticists generally. He did not avoid the exaggeration of Victor Hugo, the sentimentality of Lamartine, or the egoism of Musset. He had a tremendous power of assimilation and was an inspired improvisor. The later developments of his life belong, with the works of Wagner, to the history of music in Germany and the sequel of the romantic movement in the second half of the nineteenth century.

One other figure, that of Chopin, must be added to the group of romantic musicians in Paris between 1830 and 1850. Though a greater musical genius than Meyerbeer, Berlioz, or Liszt, Chopin shared least in the activities of the romantic movement, and never belonged to the radicals in the progressive musical life of the day. Imbued, though he was, with the melancholy spirit of romantic poetry and in sympathy with many of the aims of the movement, he was too exclusive in his personal tastes to mix in the encounters between unrestrained *Jeune-France* and the acrid representatives of the *école du bon sens*. As a man, Chopin lacked virility. It was unfortunately consistent with his lack of manly action all through life that, unlike the rest of his com-

patriots, he did not return to his country when the Polish revolution broke out in 1830. His inertness at such a time and while he was merely engaged in a concert tour in Austria, is all the more strange because, at his father's house in Warsaw, he had come in direct contact with some of the leading literary and political spirits of the nationalistic party in Poland.

By the end of the eighteenth century the social and philosophical ideas of Rousseau had spread to Poland as they had to every other part of Europe, and the influences of the cultured society which surrounded the youthful Chopin were much the same as if he had grown up in Germany or France. With his sensitive nature he was especially susceptible to the restless melancholy of the romantic spirit. The Polish word for this melancholy, which constituted the *mal du siècle* in France, was *zal*. In his later life Chopin said of his music that it was " son âme remplie du *zal* qu'elle raconte." But he was not subject, in his youth, to the emotional crises and wild enthusiasms of Berlioz or Liszt. On the whole, the first twenty years of his life, before he went to Paris in 1831, were disturbed by nothing more serious than the romance of his first love affair and the

nervous excitement of appearing in public as a pianist.

Chopin brought with him to Paris, however, a feeling of depression, caused partly by the miserable fate of his country, whose national spirit was being crushed under the autocratic power of Russia, and partly for the personal reason that his concert tours thus far had failed to provide him with the funds for his living expenses. His depression rather tended to make him more interesting to the fashionable coteries of the salons which he frequented, and soon he was accepted as one of the most picturesque figures in artistic circles, not only for his fascinating musical gifts, but also because he seemed like Musset to be an example of the "beautiful soul," a creature of artistic sensibility whose actions were the result of feeling rather than thought.

The principle that instinct is always right and that the solution of life is to be found in following one's emotions without restraint and without discipline, dates back to Rousseau, and is the one romantic fallacy responsible more than any other for the excesses of the decadent romanticism of the nineteenth century. In the *Correspondance* of Sand and Musset, love is exalted as the justification of life and art. She

writes to him, " Aime et écris, c'est ta vocation, mon ami. Monte vers Dieu, sur les rayons de ton génie, et envoie ta muse sur la terre, raconter aux hommes les mystères de l'amour et de la foi. Et n'aie pas peur." And there is always this dragging in of religion to justify, usually, a lack of morals ! * Religion degenerates into voluptuous religiosity. Sand even quotes the Bible to her purpose in the words of Jesus to Madeleine ; " Il te sera beaucoup remis, parce que tu as beaucoup aimé." Musset quotes in his turn, " Deux êtres qui s'aiment bien sur terre font *un* ange dans le ciel," and adds, " Connais-tu une parole plus belle et plus sublime que celle-là ? "

George Sand's interest in Chopin was, as Doumic points out in his book on Sand, a case of what the French call "maternité amoureuse." Chopin accepted, with the same lack of moral resistance which characterized all his actions, the romantic conception of an artist as a being apart, not responsible to the usual social and moral laws. Sand shows this same conception of the artist in her novels. It is one of the dogmas of romanticism that the requirements of art are incompatible with a life of social or

* Note.—The mixture of the literary " genres " was only a small part of the general romantic confusion, of love with religion, of fiction with history, etc.

moral discipline. Art, like love, justifies itself. According to the romanticists it did not make any difference what one did, as long as one was a " beautiful soul," and Chopin and Sand were both " beautiful souls." Sand was one of the few leaders of literary and artistic romanticism who seemed to have a genuine appreciation of music. Most of the romantic writers were attracted more by the plastic arts than by music and were apt to think, with Théophile Gautier, that it was " le plus désagréable et le plus cher de tous les bruits." Musset was passionately fond of music, though Doumic suggests that this was only another side of his " dandyism."

Surely Chopin, through his intercourse with George Sand and the group of writers and artists which foregathered at her villa in Nohant, came into as intimate contact with the ideas of the romantic movement as was possible. Yet his work is not characterized by the usual romantic excesses. His artistic bent was neither pictorial nor dramatic, and many of the compositions of Liszt and Berlioz seemed to him ridiculous in their confusion of the purpose of music with the aims of other arts. As early as 1833, Chopin is said to have declared that Berlioz' music was such as to justify any man who chose, to break with him. We have only

to think of the *Nocturnes* and *Impromtus*, the *Ballades* and *Scherzos*, and, above all, the *Preludes* and *Etudes* to realize that the essential quality of Chopin's inspiration was the lyrical.

The difference between Chopin and the radical romanticists is that difference which Lasserre* remarks is "si nécessaire à observer, entre ces imaginations de tristesse et de défaillance, nobles, parce qu'elles demeurent ingénues, qui inspirent les dangereux chefs-d'oeuvre de Schumann et de Chopin, et ces émotions frelatées et grimaçantes du romantisme, où l'orgueil exploite le désarroi du coeur." Chopin was even more unconscious than Schumann, who was an active propagandist of romanticism, of exploiting the romantic character of his genius. Neither Schumann nor Chopin showed that unnatural pride in the display of their personal sufferings which was characteristic of poets like Byron. Chopin, however, was not unaware of his individuality, and once he wrote, " So much is clear to me, I shall never become a Kalkbrenner ; he will not be able to alter my perhaps daring but noble resolve—to create a new era in art." That new era which Chopin helped to create with Schubert, Schumann and Liszt was the era of lyric poetry

* Lasserre : *Le romantisme français*, p. 101.

in music. The great development of lyric expression in the music of the first half of the nineteenth century, was the highest accomplishment of the musical romantic movement. In a broad sense the lyrical purpose of Chopin's and Schumann's works represents the substituting of the subjective for the objective point of view in musical composition, the emphasizing of individual feeling, and the sympathetic reflection in music of the changing moods of nature. Of all the music written under the influence of the romantic movement none has more permanent value than the lyrical compositions of Chopin. There is an exact parallel in the important place which the lyrical productions of Musset, Vigny, and Lamartine hold in the actual accomplishment of literary romanticism.

Riemann has stated that Chopin's romanticism has nothing to distinguish it from the romanticism of German composers. Yet the elegiac melancholy of the *Nocturnes*, and the revolutionary passion of the *C minor Etude* and the *Polonaise in A Flat*, seem in some ways to have more in common with the nostalgic poetry of Senancour and Vigny than the pantheistic poetry of Novalis and the fantastic writings of Tieck. Chopin's musical influences were,

however, mostly German—Hummel, for his piano style, Spohr, for his chromaticism, Mozart, for his charm and grace, and Bach, for the ever singing melodies of the inner voices. On the other hand, Chopin was not attracted by what he felt was the rugged, unpolished style of Beethoven, but shows distinctly the influence of the cantabile style of the Italian operatic composers, particularly Bellini. Here, surely, his music is very different from German romantic music. Where in German music do you find passionate, vocal melodies built up with that sense of climax which is characteristic of Italian lyric opera, like the second theme in the first movement of the *B minor Sonata* ? Some of Weber's melodies come nearest to it but they lack the tone of Southern passion which filled the fantasies of Chopin.

Chopin had an instinctive sense of form, which was so strong that, even when he innovates with characteristic romantic freedom, as in entirely omitting the return of the first theme in the first movement of the *B flat Minor Sonata*, there is no effect of the unusual on the listener. Counting the number of his compositions in simple two and three-part forms, one is apt to say that he was perfectly content with the simplest formal structure, but it is in analysing

such works as the *Ballades* that one is constantly struck by the gift which he possessed for molding forms to suit his purpose. His sense of formal structure has been pointed out by Huneker to show that he was a classicist as well as a romanticist.*

It is often stated by historians that romanticists like Schumann and Chopin were unable to handle the larger forms for lack of ability in developing their material, and consequently they were forced to express themselves in the shorter forms. This essay has tried to show that the changes from classicism to romanticism were general, that they were shown in society as well as in art, and that there were certain general tendencies in these changes. One of these broad tendencies was from the objective to the subjective attitude. Now the lyric is a subjective form, and the reason romantic composers wrote lyrics was not because they were unable to write sonatas but because they felt, with the rest of Europe in the nineteenth century, the reaction from eighteenth century rationalism and the pseudo-classic repression of the individual. Not having cultivated the sonata form, they showed a natural lack of

* Huneker: *The Classic Chopin*, in *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. I., No. 4.

experience when they occasionally used it.

To the powerful influence for lyric expression in romantic art no one, whether we think of Vigny, Lamartine, and Hugo in France, Heine in Germany, or Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley in England, has left us a greater and more imperishable testimonial, than Chopin.

VII

CONCLUSION

At no time during the last half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries can one consider the course of musical development in France apart from its relation to the general romantic movement without losing much of its significance. The romantic spirit did not appear in music until after it had already largely affected art, literature and society. This was chiefly for the reason that musicians in the eighteenth century were engaged in developing the more or less mechanical principles of modern homophonic composition—the theory of harmony and the figured-bass, and the laws of the larger structural forms. While the problems of modern musical composition were still being wrestled with, the rising influence of the romantic movement was exerted on music through the æsthetic doctrines of men like Rousseau. Such theories of musical æsthetics, however, were, at this time, far ahead of musical practice. As the technique of composition developed and improved, music came to reflect more and more the changes in the thought

and feeling of the age, but it was not until the time of Berlioz that music became as saturated with romanticism as were literature and art.

Romanticism in literature grew out of the reaction from the extremes of pseudo-classicism. The music of Couperin and Rameau suffered from the repressive influence of the objective and imitative classic point of view. But French music in the eighteenth century had no Rousseau to awaken it to the possibilities of emotional and individual expression; nor was the art of modern composition sufficiently developed to respond fully to the ideas of social and intellectual freedom which were promulgated by the leaders of the "enlightenment." Consequently we find that the principles of classicism held sway much longer in music than in literature. Instrumental music in the eighteenth century was entirely objective in spirit. In respect to operatic composition, composers, critics, and the public were engrossed with the question of the relative merits of the French and Italian styles. From the countless polemics resulting from the *guerre des bouffons* and the Gluck-Piccinni controversy, a few general conclusions can be drawn. The champions of French opera desired dramatic, rather than lyric, expressiveness in music. They derided

the undramatic conventionalities of the Italian method. The supporters of the Italian opera, on the other hand, claimed that real dramatic power in music depended on lyrical and sensuous melody and criticised the academic character of the more complex harmonic background and orchestral accompaniment of French opera. The classic conception of music as an imitative art persisted in the arguments of both parties and was emphasized in the operatic theories of Gluck. Gluck's music, however, had so much individuality and suggestive power, entirely aside from its connection with drama, that it did much more than merely characterize the action it accompanied. It foreshadowed the romantic establishment of music as an art which should have its justification, not in its use in supporting or imitating other arts, but in its own peculiar powers of emotional expression. Gluck's share in accomplishing this change makes him the great eighteenth century precursor of musical romanticism. Rousseau divined the power of modern music, unaccompanied by words or action, to create moods and to suggest poetic images, but Gluck was the first musician to demonstrate this romantic theory in France.

The social upheaval caused by the French Revolution had but little effect on French music

The music which accompanied the patriotic odes in itself did not reflect the democratic spirit of the times. In the use, for the national fêtes, of massive choral and orchestral effects, there was, however, an anticipation of the use of exaggerated means of expression by the later romantic composers.

At the opening of the century Chateaubriand and Mme. de Staël were the dominating figures in art and letters. While certain of the romantic characteristics which they developed in literature can be found in contemporary music, many of their ideas did not appear in music until considerably later. The emphasis on color and picturesqueness in Chateaubriand's prose was paralleled to a limited extent in the music of Lesueur, Méhul, and Spontini. The choice of operatic subjects such as *Ossian*, *Josef*, *Uthal*, and *Fernand Cortez* testified to the extending horizon of the romantic imagination. On the other hand, the essential emotional impressionism, "le vague des passions," and the egoistic melancholy of Chateaubriand, were hardly expressed in music before Berlioz.

While Mme. de Staël was interpreting the "septentrional" spirit of German literature and philosophy, the classical symphonies of Haydn and the symphonies and operas of Mozart—

which, after all, represent no more than the preliminary stage of emotional expressiveness in pure music — were gradually gaining a place in the musical life of Paris. Although the progress of instrumental music as an independent art capable of subjective expression was much more advanced in Germany than in France, yet at the end of the eighteenth century it had not caught up with the development of the romantic spirit in German literature. The later works of Beethoven, Weber, and Schubert, mirror quite definitely the striving for imaginative effects, the endless longing for the expression of the infinite, the sympathy with nature, and the tendency towards subjective lyricism; but the imaginative and emotional qualities of these works were not appreciated in France until shortly before 1830.

With the exception of the works of Chateaubriand and Mme. de Staël, the Imperial epoch was markedly sterile in genuine literature. But in 1820 the first volume of Lamartine's *Méditations poétiques*, published anonymously, gained a great success. There followed an extraordinary outburst of lyric poetry in which the emotionalism of Chateaubriand was carried to an extreme of poetic sensibility. In 1830 the revolt of the romanticists in the drama was

brought to a head in the performance of Hugo's *Ernani*. It was in these years that the romantic impetus in music discharged itself with a vigor all the more striking on account of its suddenness. The novelty of the fantastical style of Weber's *Freischütz* had hardly worn off when the Parisian public was carried off its feet by performances of Auber's *La Muette de Portici* and Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*. The *Fantastic Symphony* left no doubt as to the possibility of music's taking an active part in the romantic revolt. The lyric element emphasized in the poetical works of Lamartine, Vigny, Hugo, and Musset appeared at the same time in the *Années de Pélérinage* of Liszt, in many parts of Berlioz' larger works, and in nearly all the compositions of Chopin. There is a distinct analogy between Liszt and Lamartine. They were both improvisors. Liszt thought of music as Lamartine thought of poetry, as a vague, indefinite language, responsive as an Aeolian harp to all that was beautiful in life. Neither the works of the poet nor those of the musician lacked an occasional note of despair, but as a whole they were spontaneously idealistic. *Les Préludes* of Liszt, like the quotation from Lamartine which precedes it, was inspired by a spirit of optimism.

The early music of Berlioz was gloomy in feeling, like the poetry of Alfred de Vigny. In the *Fantastic Symphony*, *Lélio*, and *Harold in Italy*, he showed the same restless dissatisfaction with life that Vigny had shown in his poetry, but, in Berlioz' case, resignation to a pessimistic view of life expressed itself, in such works as *Les Troyens*, in a loftier, more reposeful and classic attitude. Berlioz' compositions have also much in common with the lyric poetry of Hugo. They display a similar fertility of poetic ideas and breadth of conception. The program music of both Berlioz and Liszt shows the wide range of subject, the interest not only in the picturesqueness of the exterior world, but also in the endless struggle between good and evil in the soul of man, as does the poetry of Hugo.

The extreme of romantic sensitiveness is reached in the character and verse of Musset. Chopin, among the musicians, experienced as intensely as he, the depressing melancholy of the age. Chopin is very close to Musset in the delicate sensitiveness of his emotional inspiration. Unlike Musset, however, Chopin did not consecrate himself to his sorrows, and the extreme morbidity of Musset's poetry is lacking in Chopin's music. Of all the romantic musicians,

Chopin was the one who least consciously cultivated the romantic pose. His inspiration was absolutely spontaneous ; he was led entirely by his feelings, and he was the perfect lyricist of the musical romantic movement.

Revolution in the drama followed the outburst of romantic lyricism. The theatre became the battle-ground where all the most radical reforms of romanticism were fought over in the most exaggerated partisan spirit. In *Lélio*, Berlioz took the same initiative in asserting the romantic principles in music that Hugo had taken in delivering the romantic ultimatum contained in the *Preface to Cromwell*. In Berlioz' early works he showed the freedom in the choice and treatment of his subjects that Hugo showed in mingling comedy and tragedy and in setting aside the laws of the three unities. Berlioz sought to express his own personal experiences rather than the common experiences of mankind. On the stage, Hugo wanted to substitute individual characters for conventional types. Berlioz was not only the leading propagandist of the musical romantic movement but also the one composer who expressed most completely in his own music the various phases of romanticism.

All that was decadent in the romantic

movement of 1830 was reflected in the insincere and commercialized operas of Scribe and Meyerbeer. In their works are seen the forced use of unusual dramatic situations, the intentional casting away of all restraint for the sake of sensational theatricalness. The romantic traits which they emphasized were all external and superficial ones. Romantic opera, continuing to be, as a rule, largely a social entertainment, tended to be theatrical rather than dramatic, and merely accompanied the popular Italian vocal style with a superficial imitation of the reforms of romantic drama.

The drama was only one other medium for the expression of the romantic revolt from the classic formulas. Painting was still another. The breaking away from rules and laws was not only displayed in the various forms of art, but also in the lives of the artists. Berlioz, Liszt, and Chopin, like Vigny, Sand, and Musset, were all living examples of the Rousseauan theory of individual responsibility. They rebelled from the conventions of society and refused to be bound by any law, even the law of their own individuality. Desire for freedom from rules and traditions spread to religion, philosophy, and politics; their principles were reconstructed on a basis of greater liberty

everywhere for the individual. Liszt obtained for the art of music its recognition as a vital part of the new social structure; he argued that the object of music, as of religion and philosophy, was to interpret life in the broadest and deepest sense. The change is great from the eighteenth century conception of music as an art with no connection with contemporary intellectual activity, to Liszt's theory of music as an interpretation of life, able to respond to all the philosophical, religious, and artistic impulses of its time.

The relation of music to the romantic movement in France, perceptible, though undeveloped in the eighteenth century, became more intimate in the nineteenth, until, in the works of Berlioz, music took an equal place with literature and art in the expression of the romantic principles. The breaking away from classic traditions, the emphasis on personal and emotional expression, the development of color and picturesqueness, and the establishment of music as a self-sufficing art, sum up the main phases of the accomplishment in music of the romantic movement. Chopin understood best how to fulfil the desire for lyric expression; Liszt realized the significance of the new status of music in its relation to life in general; Berlioz, however, both in his music and in his writing, promulgated most completely the romantic doctrines.

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